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'Travel bubble between S. Korea and Saipan is ideal' PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 51

www.saipantribune.com | MONDAY MARCH 15, 2021 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

8 local cases of COVID-19 ID'd

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Breaking the 204-day streak of zero community transmissions, the CNMI saw its first community cases of COVID-19 in a while over the weekend when eight asymptomatic people tested positive for COVID-19, boosting the CNMI's cumulative total from 146 last Thursday to 154 yesterday.

In a press statement yesterday, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. said all new positive cases were identified after contact tracing and testing a total of 49 immediate contacts of the first case and the other positive cases. "As of 9:35am, March 14, 2021, CHCC and the COVID-19 Task Force have identified 49 individuals through expanded

See COVID-19 on Page 4

Public schools close for 14 days

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» PSS transitions to remote learning

With news of the CNMI's first local COVID-19 transmission in 204 days dominating headlines over the weekend, the Public School System im-

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ON THE NET

- Temporary closure of daycare centers, before- and after-school programs, infant & toddler programs. PAGE 2

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, March 14, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,758	9	7,767
Recovered	7,601	2	7,603
Active	22	9	31
Deaths	133	0	133
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			132,206

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	146	8	154
Traced via Travel Screening	121	0	121
Traced via Community Screening	26	8	34
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 11,205	Dose 1: 662	Dose 1: 745
Dose 2: 8,547	Dose 2: 138	Dose 2: 345

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Savannah is 2021 Miss Marianas

By NEIL FAMA
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REPORTER

Savannah Relox Delos Santos is the newest Miss Marianas.

Delos Santos was crowned the 2021 Miss Marianas at the Stellar Marianas-organized pageant last Saturday, March 13, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

2019 Miss Marianas Shannon Tudela Sasamoto, who

See SAVANNAH on Page 4

2021 Miss Marianas Savannah Delos Santos, center, poses with 2019 Miss Marianas Shannon Sasamoto, on her right, and from left, 2021 Miss Marianas contestants Naomi Lizama Lilly Carillo, Vincent Rabasto, Toremy Diaz, Ha'Ane Eugenio, Bernadette Horey, Richelle Ramon, after the coronation of Delos Santos during last Saturday's 2021 Miss Marianas Pageant at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.
NEIL FAMA

1st marijuana producer license issued

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Cannabis Commission issued last Friday the first marijuana commercial producer license in the CNMI—a development that Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres de-

See MARIJUANA on Page 4

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres congratulates Victor Cabrera, owner of T-Marianas, who was issued last Friday a commercial marijuana producer one class license at the Governor's Office conference room. Also in the photo starting behind Torres are acting CNMI Cannabis Commission managing director Janina Maratita, press secretary Kevin Bautista, CCC board chair Nadine Deleon Guerrero (partly hidden), and CCC board secretary Journie Hofschneider.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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BUSINESS
WAVE Apparel promotes good vibes, positive outlook, and taking care of the environment.

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NATION
Breonna Taylor's family continue their call for justice, a year after her death.

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LIFE & STYLE
An actor strips naked onstage at this year's Cesar Awards winners ceremony.

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Local

MCS to continue with its face-to-face classes

In light of recent news about community transmission of COVID-19 in the CNMI, Mount Carmel School will continue with its face-to-face classes, with parents given the option of keeping their students at home for the time being.

The school assured, though, that it remains in close contact with the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and has been assured by CHCC that the school's current COVID-19 mitigation protocols are more than adequate to prevent spread at the school.

This includes conducting temperature and symptom checks for all incoming employees, students, parents, and guests; requiring everyone on campus to wear a mask; enforcing a physical distance of at least 6 feet from others; continuing the use of plexiglass partitions in the classroom; continuing the use of UVC lighting fixtures in all classrooms, which kill all types of coronavirus particles circulated in the rooms; continuing procedures for ensuring physical distancing during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up; and continuing procedures for ensuring the safe delivery of student meals

All faculty, staff, administrators, and vendors will also reinforce all COVID-19 mitigation guidelines set forth by the school and the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force.

"Despite these measures and assurances, we understand that some families may feel anxiety and uncertainty over the current situation. That is why we will allow families to keep their children home if they so choose. We ask parents to please notify teachers and/or the main office if they would prefer online learning at this time. Student absences will be excused and we will do what we can to continue student learning with asynchronous and synchronous options," the school said in a statement over the weekend.

"We also urge all families to remain vigilant in their efforts to stop the spread with these three simple Ws:

■ WASH your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;

■ WATCH your distance by maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and other people you don't live with; and

■ WEAR a mask in public settings around people who don't live in your household.

"Further updates will continue to be published on all our media platforms. We thank you for your continued support and understanding," the MCS statement added. ***(MCS)***

Who is being vaccinated?
How do I sign up?
Vaccination is OPEN for individuals 50 years+ OR People working in:
Grocery stores, restaurants (including catering) bakeries, wholesalers, commercial farming and fishing
Gas stations , electric or other energy and utilities companies
Taxi, other transportation, and delivery
Construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation of critical infrastructure
Hotel/lodging, maintaining business plazas, recreational facilities, or public events including sports federations
Barbers, salons, and massage therapy
Banks or insurance companies
Trash collection and other waste services
Schools, daycares, and colleges
Media & Telecommunications
CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies)
COVID-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force
Faith-based groups
Healthcare
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ONLINE at vaccinatecnmi.com
Over the PHONE by calling 682-SHOT (7468)
Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine is available for Saipan residents 65 years+
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VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE: vaccinatecnmi.com
@cnmichcc

Temporary closure of daycare centers, before- and after-school programs, infant & toddler programs

The Child Care Licensing Program is directing all centers it licenses to shut down all child care services and child care programs operation effectively immediately and ending March 19, 2021.

This end date could still change, though. According to a memorandum from the Child Care Licensing Program, the 14-day pause will give the program enough time to assess the situation arising from the recent identification of four new COVID-19 cases in the CNMI—all of them community transmission cases—and determine whether or not to extend the closure period.

This comes soon after the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force identified last Friday, March 12, 2021, one individual who tested positive through community screening for travel. A day after, three more individuals were confirmed positive for COVID-19 via contact tracing. Later in the evening of Saturday, at about 7:50pm, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, through KSPN2 News, confirmed that the first case is a front-line worker who has already been vaccinated. This all means there is community-based spread happening in the CNMI. That prompted the CNMI Public School System to suspend all in-person classes for the next 14 days or until further notice and activate full remote learning instructions in the meantime.

CCLP supervisor Gordon B. Sodas said in the memorandum that the program's priority is ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children and is implementing the temporary closure of day care centers and group child care homes, before and after school programs, family child care homes, and infant and toddler programs in an abundance of caution and in support of the renewed declaration of the state of public health emergency in the CNMI.

The program is under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Office. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

NMC transitions to virtual classes this week

Northern Marianas College is migrating from in-person instruction to virtual/online classes for a week, from March 15 through March 21, 2021, while other classes that are already being done virtually will continue as scheduled.

Throughout this period, the college will remain open and non-faculty employees will continue to report to campus while adhering to COVID-19 preventive measures.

Students, visitors, and college contractors may make prescheduled appointments should they need to physically be on campus. Contact the following to make an appointment:

Office of Admissions and Records, Admissions / Enrollment / Registering for Classes, email admissions@marianas.edu or call (670) 237-6768/6771, Financial Aid Office, Financial Aid Options, Financial Aid Questions, email fao@marianas.edu or call (670) 237-6791/6792, NMC Finance Office, Tuition Payments / Procurement / Finance Inquiries, email finance@marianas.edu or call (670) 237-6821 OR (670) 237-6700 or (670) 237-6702

NMC continues to emphasize and enforce preventative measures for COVID-19.

As always, NMC students are being reminded to follow recommended guidelines to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

More details and updates have been sent to students and employees through their NMC email accounts. Students and employees are told to monitor and check their email regularly. ***(Neil Fama)***

Kilili: Most qualify for $1,400 rebates

Most CNMI income tax payers will qualify for the $1,400 additional rebate under the American Rescue Plan bill that President Joe Biden signed last Friday, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) yesterday.

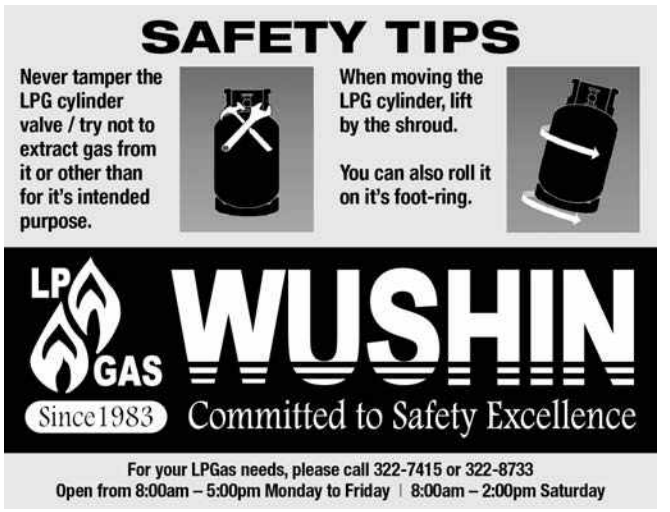
In his e-kilili newsletter, Sablan said single tax filers with incomes of up to $75,000, head of household filers with incomes up to $112,500, and joint filers with incomes up to $150,000 will receive the full payment. Each dependent child will also receive $1,400. The delegate said the definition of dependent has been expanded to include students over age 17, elderly adults, and disabled persons, who do not file their own tax returns.

Sablan said the $1,400 rebate for each taxpayer will add to last December's $600 stimulus, bringing the total to $2,000.

He said the U.S. Treasury will provide the necessary funding to the CNMI government for distribution.

On unemployment benefits, Sablan said the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (up to about $345 per week) and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ($300 per week) will continue through Sept. 6, 2021.

He said the total number of weeks any individual may collect this benefit has been increased to 79 weeks. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***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'Travel bubble between S. Korea and Saipan is ideal'

Talks of a travel bubble—opening Saipan to tourists from South Korea in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic—have been on the table since late last year but that is still up in the air because the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport has yet to respond to the CNMI's request for a meeting.

Long-time businessman and P&A Corp. chair Hong Kyun Kim believes, though, that a travel bubble agreement between South Korea and Saipan can serve as a model for other countries that are trying to find ways to slowly open up and ignite the tourism industry that was put on hold due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Kim

"The travel bubble concept is ideal between South Korea and Saipan. …Japan and China will take a long time, that's why the focus is on South Korea. …The CNMI is the best place to welcome back tourists from Korea because of its good history of handling and implementing COVID-19 protocols that effectively screens arriving passengers and limit community transmission… and for their part, South Korea started to distribute the vaccine [in the] last week of February," he said.

Kim, who owns several businesses in the CNMI, supports the idea of travel bubble, saying that, as president of the Saipan Korea Cultural Center and representing Korean businesses on island, he is working on this independently to help fast-track the coordination between the CNMI and South Korea governments, with a target date of July this year.

He pointed out that the CNMI's record in handling the pandemic "is like no other." When news of a COVID-19 outbreak came out in January 2020, the CNMI government and health leaders took it seriously early on. By March, the CNMI was under a state of significant emergency and state of public emergency, mass testing was done in April led by the COVID-19 Task Force. In December, the CNMI started to receive vaccines, and by January, vaccination to priority groups started ramping up.

"Saipan is attractive to Korean tourists. Aside from it being close, just a three-hour flight away, other factors are noteworthy. First, no COVID-19 case was reported from Korea from the time of the outbreak and when flights were stopped. Even when charter flights went back-and-forth to carry Korean nationals back to Korea, there were zero reports of positive cases and transmission. Of all the positive cases that surfaced after quarantine on Saipan, no Korean national was involved.

Second, the CNMI has vaccinated over 10,000 residents already, which makes 10% of the population. Third, CNMI officials are hoping to achieve more than 90% vaccination of the population," he said. "With the current vaccination registration and procedure, we will be able to reach 80% and achieve herd immunity by April."

Kim assured that Koreans are ready to travel and have been reserving trips not only to the CNMI but in other parts of the world, "which means they are ready to travel and it would be good for the economy if we capture that market," Kim added

Kim said that he will meet with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres at the end of this month to talk about plans of a possible trip to Korea and talk to public officials there. ***(Bea Cabrera)***

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THANKS TO BIDEN'S AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

'Furloughed employees will get back to 80 hours'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

With President Joseph R. Biden's signing of the $1.9-trillion American Rescue Plan that will give the CNMI a sizable chuck of cash, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday he will make sure that those government employees who've been furloughed will go back to work.

In an interview at the Office of the Governor's conference room, Torres said he wants the reduction-in-force issue addressed first and foremost and that employees that are right now on furlough should be put back to 80 hours.

Torres announced the implementation of a reduction-in-force last February due to the continued lack of tourists and a depressed economy. That meant 180 government employees who are on furloughs will be permanently terminated from their jobs.

When asked last Friday to comment on Biden's signing of the relief bill, Torres said he congratulates the president and all those that have worked hard for the bill. "I know that we got a list of appropriations, so to speak," Torres said, adding that he continues to work with the Department of Finance and the Office of Management and Budget on the government's priorities and the restriction on spending those funds.

The governor said one thing is for sure, they are going to look at the deficit, all the billings of the CNMI, whether it is for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. or other billings, vendors, Super Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkut issues, and bonds, and other projects that need to move forward. He said they also want to make sure that retirees continue to receive 100% of their pensions.

"There's a lot of work needs to be done," said the governor, adding that he met with House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), and the Judicial Branch, and is also communicating with Attorney General Edward Manibusan on this rollout.

Torres said they will issue more details about the administration's spending plan.

Torres and Palacios earlier stated that, with the passage of the American Rescue Plan of 2021, the CNMI will receive much-needed relief, most notably through the stimulus check payments, funding for government operations, and additional funding for unemployment assistance.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) earlier said those who remain laid off will continue to receive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, taxpayers will receive another economic impact payment, $1,400, and more dependent children and certain dependent adults will qualify for additional aid.

IPI receivership gets more time

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The receivership proceedings of Imperial Pacific International Holdings, Ltd. and Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC was given a week-long extension.

In an order last Friday, March 12, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona allowed IPIH and IPI's receivership to be extended until March 19 at 1:30pm.

Manglona said the order appointing receiver and the setting terms of receivership have been modified so that the receiver won't take action in the sale of assets until this coming Friday.

IPIH chair Cui Li Jie had until last Friday to pay the U.S. Department of Labor a total that was said to exceed $10 million owed from a consent judgment issued two years ago. All parties—IPIH, IPI, and USDOL—have been communicating with each other about the extension of the receivership.

According to court documents, USDOL Wage and Hour investigators have been examining the payroll documents provided by IPI but required more time to determine the number of wages due, but the parties also needed more time to complete their negotiations.

Charles Song, counsel for USDOL, said that USDOL has been communicating with the appointed receiver, Joyce Tang, who agreed to not take any action until March 19. Song said this will allow the parties more time to reach an agreement to purge contempt.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the U.S District Court for NMI ordered last March 5 the appointment of Joyce Tang as receiver of IPI in a potential settlement to pay off the balance that IPI owes the USDOL in a consent judgment.

MARIJUANA

From Page 1

scribed as a milestone in the cannabis industry.

The newest licensee, Slider Marianas LLC, which does business as T-Marianas, was granted a commercial marijuana producer Class 1 license in a signing ceremony held at the Office of the Governor's conference room.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres immediately congratulated the owner of T-Marianas, Victor Cabrera, for the successful license application and thanked the CCC board members and its officials for helping move the process.

"…We're here to make sure that we support it," Torres said.

He also expressed appreciation to CCC managing director Monique Sablan for always pushing for the cannabis process, saying they were able to sign the first successful application, thanks to Sablan's leadership and cooperation of the CCC board. "It is a milestone," the governor said.

He said the process is made difficult by the pandemic, but at the end of the day, they want to encourage everyone to get their permits and do it right. "The industry is here. I support it. We support it. And just follow through. And, I'm sure, with the leadership [at CCC], they'll be able to assist you every step of the way," Torres said.

CCC board chair Nadine Deleon Guerrero said it's exactly 18 months since they were sworn in as commissioners. "And it's been a challenging road. But it's been fun. It's been great working with the administration," Deleon Guerrero said.

She said they're very proud that a CNMI resident got to sign the very first commercial license in the CNMI. "That's amazing. That is great. And we just want to welcome you into the industry. What a precedent to be setting," said Deleon Guerrero, referring to T-Marianas owner Cabrera.

She said CCC board secretary Journie Hofschneider and vice chair Matt Deleon Guerrero have been working hard with acting managing director Janina Maratita and managing director Monique Sablan to ensure that "all the X's and dots and the T's are crossed" and that they have everything in place.

Sablan, who's in the U.S. mainland and is on leave, spoke on the phone at the press conference.

Sablan said she looks forward to working with Cabrera when she gets back on island.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

SAVANNAH

From Page 1

was also the first to reign for two consecutive years due to the postponement of the pageant last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, handed over her tiara to Delos Santos, who went head-to-head against seven other women for the crown.

Delos Santos is a 23-year-old graduate from Chaminade University with a B.A. in Business Administration-Marketing and is currently working on her master's degree in Accounting.

As Miss Marianas, Delos Santos is excited to take on the many upcoming programs and has many ideas that she is ready to implement throughout the year. She noted that one of the most challenging parts during her road to Miss Marianas was not believing in herself, especially at the beginning of the journey.

"I love you all so much, thank you so much to everyone who believed in me. I hope I will make you proud, and I know I will," Delos Santos said.

She won $3,000 for her Miss Marianas win, a one-year free use of a 2021 Hyundai Venue from Triple J Motors, and a slew of other sponsored prizes.

Delos Santos was also awarded the "Miss Friendship Award," "Best in National Costume," and "Best in Evening Gown."

Coming in as first runner-up was Bernadette Horey. Horey also received the "Miss Marianas Photogenic Award."

Completing the Top 3 as 2nd runner up was Ha'Ane San Nicolas Eugenio.

Toremy Ayuyu Diaz received the People's Choice Award.

Vincent Rabasto was awarded the "Stellar Star" and the "Tresemme Best in Hair Award."

Richelle Tsunami Ramone received the award for "Best in Swimsuit."

The remaining 2021 Miss Marianas contestants who competed for the title were Lily Carillo and Naomi Lizama.

PUBLIC

From Page 1

mediately announced the suspension of in-person classes in all public elementary, middle, and high schools on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota for the next 14 days.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada announced last Saturday afternoon, March 13, 2021, that PSS will transition back to full remote learning for two weeks starting from March 13 until March 27.

"I want to assure all of our students, parents, teachers and staff, and our public education stakeholders that we are doing everything we can to get through this, and ensuring optimum safety of all our students, staff, and their families," Ada said in a statement sent to media.

Ada's office said that school staff should self-quarantine for the next 14 days during the period covered, beginning Saturday, March 13 to Saturday, March 27, 2021. School administrators and support staff will self-quarantine for office days after securing their campuses. All campuses will continue its regular deep cleaning and sanitation. Central office personnel will report to work enforcing the 3W's, and all social distancing measures and protocols, among others.

"We should continue to monitor our health and that of our household members, and communicate with our respective healthcare provider regarding any concerns," Ada said.

He said the decision to temporarily suspend face-to-face learning was approved by the Board of Education, in coordination with the CNMI Governor's COVID-19 Task Force.

COVID-19

From Page 1

contact tracing. All 49 contacts have been safely isolated away from the community. Contact tracing will continue to identify high-risk contacts and to isolate them away from the community," the statement said.

At this point, CHCC assured that it's not seeing an instance of widespread community transmission. "The concern right now is providing care to the individuals and potential individuals exposed to COVID-19. Early identification will help to protect our community," the statement added.

Toward this end, CHCC will be offering COVID-19 testing at Kanoa Resort Alternate Care Site in Susupe from today, March 15, to March 19 from 1pm to 4pm. This will be a free community-based testing, but an identification card is required to enter the site.

Speaking at an emergency press conference last Saturday, CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña said the 147th case—a front-liner—was identified through outbound travel testing last Friday. The individual did not show any symptoms and had already been fully vaccinated.

Muña said this means that even after being fully vaccinated does not mean that a person will not get the virus.

The 147th case is not a traveler but has a history of being in contact with those who are arriving in the CNMI, Muña said, adding that they confirmed the 147th case after three tests.

By 10pm last Friday, contact tracing identified 10 high-risk contacts who were transported to the Kanoa Resort. On March 13 at 8am testing for all 10 contacts was conducted. Two hours later, three out of 10 individuals tested positive for COVID-19. This then raised the cumulative total to 150, and, according to CHCC, all three additional cases (148, 149, and 150) are closely related to the 147th case.

Ten more additional high-risk contacts were linked to the 147th case andf they were then isolated and swabbed for COVID-19. At this point, there were 20 high-risk contacts that were identified for case 147.

According to a statement from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, 29 more high-risk contacts were identified: 15 high-risk contacts for the 148th case, and 14 contacts for the 149th and 150th cases. Of these, four asymptomatic people tested positive for COVID-19, raising the CNMI's total to 154.

As of yesterday, CHCC and the COVID-19 Task Force have identified 49 individuals through expanded contact tracing. All 49 contacts have been safely isolated, while contact tracing will continue to identify high-risk contacts and isolate them.

As of 6pm yesterday, Muña confirmed that the CNMI is not at high-risk of community transmission.

Community lockdown

As far as going into lockdown, Muña said that after discussions with the CHCC medical team, they do not feel that it is necessary at this time.

"But, of course, that's up to the governor. We are not suggesting that a lockdown is necessary. We have the tools to contain this, and we have the testing capability to identify and contain this," Muña said, adding that the CNMI is "better equipped and better prepared."

As the CNMI continues to see inbound travelers, Muña assured that the two most recent flights have tested negative for COVID-19.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

DOJ pressed for equality in US territories

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Arizona), who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee, and 12 of his House colleagues, wrote Attorney General Merrick Garland last Thursday asking the U.S. Department of Justice to stop defending federal statutes that arbitrarily deny equal treatment to U.S. citizens in the territories in a range of federal programs, including Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a vital safety net which protects low-income Americans who are aged, blind, or disabled from extreme poverty.

Equally American issued the following statement in support of this important letter:

"I hope this congressional letter will encourage the Biden DOJ to take the position that no otherwise eligible American should be denied SSI simply because of where they live," said Neil Weare, president and founder of Equally American, a nonpartisan public interest organization that works to advance equality and voting rights in U.S. territories.

"There is no rational reason why Americans in those territories should be treated differently than their peers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands, who are all eligible for SSI benefits. This discrimination is not just unfair; it is unconstitutional," Weare added.

The Supreme Court recently agreed to hear a case challenging the constitutionality of arbitrarily excluding otherwise eligible Americans living in the territories from the SSI program. *United States v. Vaello-Madero* will decide whether such discrimination violates the Constitution's equal protection guarantee. The Biden DOJ must now decide whether to continue defending the challenged discrimination.

"Equally American applauds Chairman Grijalva and his House colleagues for taking this stand, and we join them in urging the Biden DOJ to discontinue defending the discrimination at issue in *Vaello-Madero*, just as DOJ has recently done in an array of other cases brought by the prior Administration," Weare added. ***(PR)***

Law Revision Commission seeking original seal design

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Law Revision Commission is seeking an original seal design that reflects its duties and functions to all three branches of the CNMI government and that is closely identified with important local events, activities, history, and symbols of the CNMI.

In line with this, the commission is inviting CNMI residents from age 10 to 18 to submit entries to its "Seal Design Contest." The top winning entry will receive a cash prize of $300, sponsored by the Northern Judiciary Historical Society. LRC members' and staff's immediate family members are not eligible to participate.

Deadline to submit entries is 5pm (Standard Chamorro Time) of April 1, 2021, either physically or electronically.

You can submit the required documents by the deadline physically to the Commonwealth Law Revision Office, JCT Building II unit 6, between 8am and 12pm and 1pm and 5pm, Tuesday to Friday, except holidays; or electronically at CNMILAW@NMIJudiciary.com.

Winners will be announced and prizes will be awarded in May 2021.

General rules and guidelines

Only one seal design entry is allowed per participant. Designs must be the participant's original work. No third-party artwork or images, including clipart or copyrighted graphics, may be used. Participants shall warrant that their work does not infringe any copyright or other propriety rights, and that it does not contain material that is scandalous, obscene, libelous, otherwise contrary to the law.

Designs will be judged on the seal design's aesthetics, creativity, and content in relation to the duties and functions of the LRC and the specifications listed above.

Seal designs must be original and incorporate the text "Commonwealth Law Revision Commission," must include symbols and/or images of the latte stone, Carolinian mwaar, books(s), and designs must be hand-drawn or digitally created and should be submitted on letter-size (8.5 x 11 in.) paper of sufficient quality.

The LRC reserves the right to refuse the winner's seal as an official seal of the LRC, if such refusal would serve the best interest of the LRC.

Providing false information, not adhering to the official rules and submission requirements, not meeting the submission deadline, or not providing a transfer and release form below may result in disqualification.

A large part of the seal design will be graded by content (50 points), which shows that the participant followed instructions by submitting their entry timely and by completing the work by using the required specifications.

The LRC plans to host a "Website Resources and Basics of Legal Research" presentation via Facebook Live from its Facebook page, Commonwealth Law Revision Commission. Participants who attend the presentation or watch the complete video on the Facebook page and correctly answers at least seven out of the 10 questions will receive a bonus of 10 points toward their entry.

Presentation date and time and questionnaire will be posted through our website www.cnmilaw.org and Facebook page.

LRC is an office within the judicial branch of the CNMI government with the principal duty of maintaining, updating, compiling, and publishing the primary law of each branch of government. To learn more about the Law Revision Commission, their resources, services they provide, or to find more information on the contest regarding the official rules and submission requirements, visit the LRC website https://cnmilaw.org, or you can call, email, and like their page on Facebook.

UOG distributes $2.27M in aid to students

The University of Guam mailed $2.27 million in federal grant aid to students this week.

Eligible students enrolled during the Fañomnåkan (January–May) 2021 semester will be receiving between $436 to $873 based on their status at the university and Pell Grant eligibility.

The disbursements are part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, which allocated emergency financial aid grants for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus.

"We've worked hard over the last few weeks to get these funds distributed to our students," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise. "Our students have remained committed to their education at UOG, and we are equally committed to providing them with as much financial and academic support as possible."

In addition to the federal grant aid this semester, the University of Guam has provided financial relief to students through a 5% rebate on tuition and the waiving of student fees. ***(PR)***

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866
03/15/21

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST A RELEASE OF FUNDS

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after March 30, 2021, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Corornavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Public Law 116-136, enacted on March 27, 2020, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Proposed Expansion of the NMHC Building	Client Intake and Interview Booth in observance of COVID-19 Safety Protocols.	Garapan, Saipan	Approximately $100,000.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. or you may access the ERR at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the Public Notice/Announcement Tab titled "Environmental Reviews"

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the project may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments from the following options: Via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; Direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and Via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net. All comments received by March 30, 2021, 4:30 p.m., will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to Mr. Jesse Wu, Director of Public Housing via email at jesse.wu@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/ Ralph DLG Torres
Governor, CNMI

Seabees help Tinian in the fight against COVID-19

By PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS WENHAN FAN
NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION 4

TINIAN—As the COVID-19 virus began to devastate the world in 2019, the small pacific island of Tinian began to implement precautions aimed at slowing the spread of the virus. Since arriving on the island of Tinian at the beginning of 2021, Seabees attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4 have been assisting the local Tinian government with various community and medical operations.

In 2020, Tinian's government implemented travel restrictions and procedures helping to limit the virus to 135 confirmed positive cases and only two deaths. With travel and border restrictions in place, locals began to feel the residual effects of decreased supplies and food being imported to the small island community. As locals struggle with COVID-19 and the effects of an economy reliant on tourism and imports, the CNMI Office of Internal Affairs and Commonwealth Grant Management Office began to apply for funding to assist with much needed food distribution. On Feb. 16, Tinian representative for the Commonwealth Grant Management Office, Dorthy San Nicolas, organized the COVID-19 Food Distribution.

After planning for months, applying for funding, purchasing food and community sign up, a drive-through distribution was made available to Tinian citizens. More than 20 volunteers, including eight Seabees from NMCB 4, distributed food and supplies to 800 families. The volunteers helped to deliver 40,000 lbs of rice, 17,600 lbs of frozen chicken, 800 cases of instant noodles, 2,400 cases of canned tuna, 2,400 packs of luncheon meat, and 3,200 cans of Vienna sausage.

"To limit contact on the day of the distribution, we implemented a two-lane drive through where residents would stay in their vehicles, while volunteers loaded food into the cars for them," Nicolas said. "The help provided by the Seabees and the other volunteers made this day a success."

In addition to food distribution assistance, Seabees with NMCB 4 helped erect tents at the Tinian Health Center, which will serve as a community vaccine distribution center over the next several weeks.

Following CDC guidelines of vaccinating in priority phases, the THC began its first round of vaccinations on Feb. 13. Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Elliott Pippen, attached to NMCB 4, assisted local health professionals in administering the vaccine to more than 100 members of the Tinian community. Flown in from Saipan the day prior to being administered, 273 first-round doses and 128 second- round doses have already been administered with an estimated 100 doses scheduled to be delivered every week.

"Vaccinations are currently in phase 1B, including infrastructure workers/essential employees, government contractors, and government employees." said Tinian Health Center's resident director Rodney Cabarles.

NMCB 4 is forward-deployed throughout the Indo-Pacific region ready to support major combat operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and to provide general engineering and civil support to U.S. and joint forces.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Twenty-three high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held on Friday, March 12, 2021, at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

MCS inducts 23 new National Honor Society members

Twenty-three high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held Friday, March 12, 2021, at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

The ceremony was led by Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, school administrators, and society officers.

The inductees were selected by a faculty council that reviewed applications from sophomores and upperclassmen who had maintained a grade point average of 3.0 and had demonstrated how they had fulfilled the society's values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

This year's inductees are Robin Alvarez, Kyla Cabrera, Moeisha Cruz, Kina Dela Cruz, Gerald Deleon Guerrero Jr., Raven Driver, Raymalyn Guanlao, Brissa Hunter, Hannah Lacap, Raeka Lantin, Jill Mallari, Donnie Militante, Brent Ortizo, Christian Palattao, Manuel Pangelinan, Kayannie Peter, Keunyce Regalado, Aubriana Sablan, Mathew Sablan, Derek Sasamoto, Yuri Sasamoto, Richard Steele, and Joshua Tenorio.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony was AlumKnight Christine Fitial Saunders, who also serves as a faculty member teaching English and Literature.

In her speech, Saunders shared the importance of honor and that means more than maintaining high grades. "I would define honor as a high respect for oneself that others recognize in you. Let's break that down, shall we? Honor is high respect for oneself, meaning the respect you have for yourself. You respect yourself so much that you make sure that there is honor in everything that you do—whether it be at school, at home, or in online platforms. Now, the second part of my definition is 'that others recognize in you.' This means that, because you imbue so much honor that it emanates from your actions, the people around you see the honor in you. NHS inductees, you are here because your leadership, service, and character are coated in honor. And it is only right that you are individually recognized today."

In his opening remarks, school president DR. Galvin Deleon Guerrero thanked parents for supporting their children and congratulated the students for their accomplishments. He also encouraged them to reconsider how they think about discipline. Referring to times when he was disciplined in school, he noted, "Beyond punishment, we must think of discipline in broader terms: as how to control from within, instead of being controlled from without; the focused student that academic disciplines call for; and remembering that the root word of discipline, disciple, reminds us all that we are followers of Christ. When you achieve that kind of discipline, anything is possible."

Established in 1921, the National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization that recognizes outstanding high school students, with more than one million student members who demonstrate the society's trademark values of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the NHS was opened in 1997. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

INVITATION FOR BIDS [IFB]

(This ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2021-007

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME:
April 14, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Purchase of Vehicle for the Tinian Field Office

The bid package will be available on March 15, 2021, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

For any inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before April 9th, 2021.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman,
NMHC Board of Directors

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
Special Education Program

Special Education Program

Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Public Participation Requirements, the Public School System Special Education Program is required to circulate for 60 days it's grant application for Special Education Funds and allows 30 days during that period for public comments from general public, including individuals with disabilities and parents of youth with disabilities. Hard copies of the Special Education Grant Applications are available from Monday to Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm at the Office of Special Education Program, Capitol Hill, House Building 1224.

For Part B – Special Education Program
30 day Public Circulation Period: March 26, 2021 thru April 25, 2021
60 day Public Comment Period: March 15, 2021 thru May 14, 2021

You may also access the Grant Applications on the PSS Website:
Special Education Program:
https://www.cnmipss.org/special-education-program

Comments may be hand delivered to the Special Education Program office located in Capitol Hill, Building number 1224 or phone your comments in to:

Special Education Program: (670) 237-3029

For more information, please contact Ms. Donna M. Flores, Director, Special Education Program at (670) 237-3029.

DPL resolves all OPA audit findings

Public auditor Kina B. Peter released the Office of Public Auditor's "Report on CNMI Agencies' Implementation of Audit Recommendations" last Thursday, March 11, 2021, that cleared the Department of Public Lands of two citations.

One of the cleared citations is Report 19-02 issued on April 19, 2019 which was regarding the "Inspection of the Assessment and Collection of Fees for Lease L91040S. Three recommendations from this audit have now been "resolved" by OPA, as stated in page 14 of OPA's Report No 21-01

OPA also cleared DPL of Audit Report 18-01 which was issued in July 2018, which was regarding "Audit of the Management of Land Leases and Temporary Permits" and is now "resolved by OPA, as stated in page 16 of the report.

DPL has continuously maintained that it acted in line with its policies on Lease L91040S, and has tightened SOPs to ensure that we remain compliant with collection of fees.

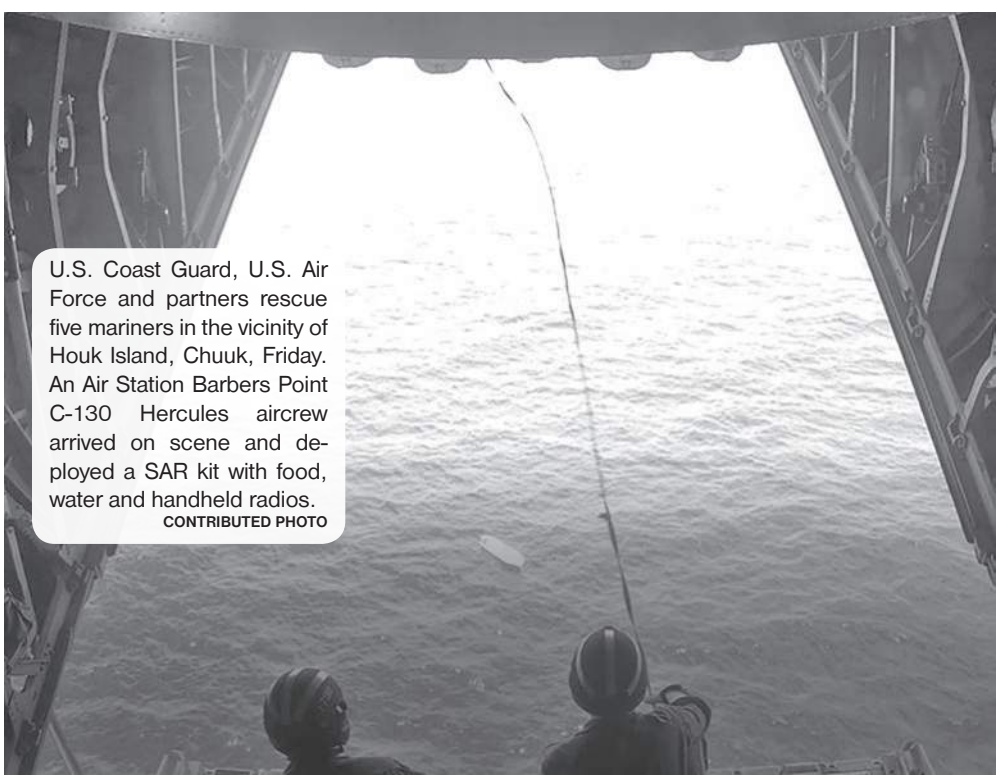
DPL has also successfully received an unqualified audit from Deloitte and Touche for the fourth consecutive year. DPL commissions an audit after the end of every fiscal year. DPL publishes a bid every year for interested firms to perform the audit. DPL is now processing the documents for selection of the firm to perform the audit for fiscal year 2020.

"This is a testament to DPL's hard work and fiscal responsibility to ensure proper procedures are in place when managing public lands," the department said in a statement last Friday.

The Constitution requires that after DPL deducts operational expenses from all lease revenue, money remaining must be remitted to Marianas Public Land Trust. DPL remitted $4,451,471.00 for remaining funds from fiscal year 2019, as per the Constitution. DPL said it will issue a separate press release on this matter.

"Since 2016, DPL has also maintained an unqualified audit for DPL's financial audits. DPL has never had unqualified audits prior, and unqualified audits four years in a row for fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 attests to the entire department's staff and management's efforts to ensure that all rules and regulations are followed," the DPL statement added.

The audits can be found on OPA's website at: https://www.opacnmi.com/oockuvoa/2021/03/Report-on- CNMI-Agencies-Implementation-of-Audit-Recommendations-OPA-Report-No.-21-01.pdf ***(PR)***



U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force and partners rescue five mariners in the vicinity of Houk Island, Chuuk, Friday. An Air Station Barbers Point C-130 Hercules aircrew arrived on scene and deployed a SAR kit with food, water and handheld radios.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Five mariners rescued off FSM's Chuuk

HONOLULU—The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and Federated States of Micronesia responders rescued five mariners in the vicinity of Houk Island in Chuuk last Friday.

The crew of the merchant vessel *Hoegh Brasilia* rescued the mariners, missing since Tuesday, and transported them to the vicinity of Houk Island where the Coast Guard cutter *Myrtle Hazard* escorted them back to the island.

"Through coordination with multiple response agencies, we were able to save five members of our community and bring them back home to their families," said Cmdr. Kristen Hahn, search and rescue mission coordinator for Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu. "The mariners having a float plan and communicating that plan with their family directly contributed to their rescue."

At 7:15pm on Thursday, Joint Rescue Sub-Center Guam received notification of a 23-foot skiff with five men on board that was overdue from a fishing trip.

Upon notification, JRSC watchstanders issued a SafetyNet broadcast to mariners. Watchstanders deployed an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules aircrew from Hawaii, diverted the CGC *Myrtle Hazard*, and began querying possible volunteer commercial Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System vessels and partners in the area to assist with the search.

At 3:15pm, Friday, an Andersen Air Force Base KC-135 Stratotanker crew located the overdue skiff 50 miles southwest of the Polusuk Atoll. The Air Force KC-130 remained on scene until an Air Station Barbers Point C-130 Hercules aircrew arrived and deployed a SAR kit with food, water and handheld radios.

The AMVER vessel *Hoegh Bracilia* arrived on scene shortly after and recovered all persons with no contact and COVID mitigation procedures. JRSC directed the AMVER vessel to proceed towards Houk Island and remain off-shore overnight. The next morning, the CGC *Myrtle Hazard* escorted the skiff back to Houk Island safely. ***(USCG)***

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.9-magnitude earthquake

At 10:18am on March 13, 2021 a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.092°N 148.138°E. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.8-magnitude quake in Merizo

At 2:19am on March 13, 2021, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred at 13.034°N 143.760°E 101 miles west southwest of Merizo Village in Guam. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories are issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE ESTATE OF RITA KAIPAT,	CIVIL ACTION NO. 90-0840 [PROPOSED] ORDER AFTER HEARING

This matter came before the Court on February 9, 2021 at 9:00 am. Attorney Colin M. Thompson appeared on behalf of Administratrix Catalina Tebit and Attorney Janet H. King appeared on behalf of the *Estate of Carmen R. Guelles*. Attorney Thompson reported that at this time, Decedent's property interest cannot be determined by the title company and there are other individuals claiming ownership for Lot 1772New-2, Lot 1772 and E.A. 297. The Court finds that In rem jurisdiction is proper and that Lot 1772New-2, Lot 1772 and E.A. 297 is property over which this Court must resolve and oversee the "disposition of property." *In Re The Matter of the Estate of Hillblom*, 2011 MP 5 at ¶ 13; citing Pennoyer v. Neff, 95 U.S. 714, 734 (1878)(in an action to quiet title or to determine the ownership interests in real property, in rem jurisdiction is appropriate).

Based on the facts presented and the documents filed in this case, the Court orders Administratrix to serve this Order to all interested parties by publication in a newspaper of regular circulation for four consecutive weeks. Administratrix shall also serve Triple J Enterprise the Motion to Amend Inventory and Order After Hearing. The hearing on Administratrix's Motion to Amend Inventory will be heard on April 6, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Interested parties are ordered to appear before the Court to present their claims.

SO ORDERED this 25th day of February, 2021.

/s/ **HONORABLE WESLEY M. BOGDAN**
Associate Judge

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
2390 Beach Road, Oleai CDA Bldg., Unit 205, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 95960
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
2021-CDA-03-RFP
Closing Date: Thursday, April 15, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m.

PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF VIDEO CONFERENCE SYSTEMS

Copies of the proposal package may be picked up at the Commonwealth Development Authority office, 2nd Floor, Unit 205, CDA Building, Beach Road Oleai, Saipan, during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ MANUEL A. SABLAN
Executive Director

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/AOC-COVID-19-001
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 20, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"CHCC VACCINATION CALL CENTER"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-020

Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of; installation of sludge dewatering equipment including the screw press skid (OFCI) for full function. The work shall include; selective demolition of existing improvements, the installation of sludge dewatering units (OFCI), shaftless auger conveyor (OFCI), installation of pressure pumps, installation of water storage tanks, and rehabilitation and modification of existing improvements, along with other miscellaneous features, for one unit at Sadog Tasi Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and one unit at Agingan WWTP. The work shall be completed with minimal disruption to the daily operation of the Sadog Tasi WWTP and Agingan WWTP. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, oeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **March 9, 2021 at 10:00 AM** (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-21-020, Installation of Sludge Dewatering Equipment" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 29, 2021, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A *Payment Bond* of one Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on March 16, 2021 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Westen Knudsen, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 51

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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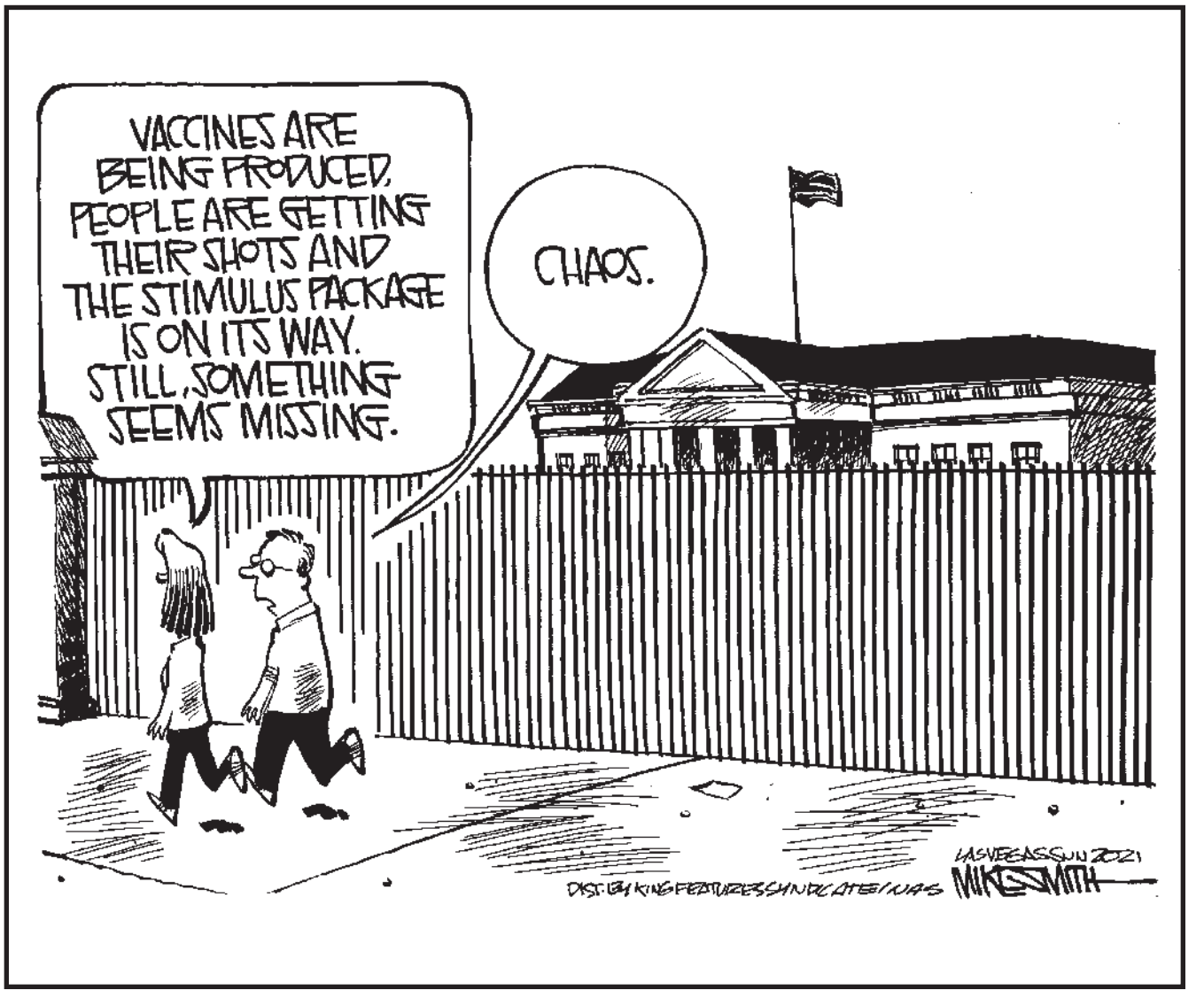
VACCINES ARE BEING PRODUCED, PEOPLE ARE GETTING THEIR SHOTS AND THE STIMULUS PACKAGE IS ON ITS WAY. STILL, SOMETHING SEEMS MISSING.
CHAOS.
LASVEGASSUN 2021
MIKE SMITH

EDITORIAL

What the American Rescue Plan does, and doesn't do

President Joe Biden signs the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan on March 11, 2021, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C. MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

The American Rescue Plan, now law from President Joe Biden's pen, is first, last and only a COVID-19 relief bill, as it should be, coming on the one-year anniversary of the pandemic's declaration. It is not a transformation of the country's priorities, as some advocates on the left claim, and a second coming of the Great Society.

Appropriately, the $1.9 trillion in financial assistance to suffering Americans, pushed through without any Republican assistance, is meant to be targeted and temporary, starting with $1,400 direct payments to individuals going out immediately (check your bank account for direct deposits). The $300 in extra weekly unemployment compensation is for six months.

The jump in the child tax credit from $2,000 to $3,000 (and $3,600 for the littlest kids) is a one-timer. The increase in the earned income tax credit is just for 2021. Then it all goes back the way it was. So much for those who project that these measures will make a big dent in child and family poverty. The extra money going out is all temporary.

What could have been the most significant and far-reaching provision, a higher federal minimum wage, isn't there. And that wasn't due to Republican opposition, but because some Senate Democrats had qualms. The minimum should rise, although more than doubling to $15 an hour by 2025 seems to be too high, too quickly.

We didn't study every line in the 628 pages that a Senate Republican made the clerks read out loud, but we can't find much in there that is permanent, just as COVID-19 isn't permanent. There's money for vaccines and testing. There's funding for better ventilation for schools and reducing class sizes. There's support for transit agencies and local and state governments.

The argument goes that the enhanced child tax credit and earned income tax credit will be popular and could be made permanent. Sure, but remember that the $600 weekly strings-free Pandemic Unemployment Assistance was popular too, but it's long gone.

(c)2021 New York Daily News

The end of the pandemic is in sight, the data show

By KEVIN PHAM and ROBERT E. MOFFIT
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

When it comes to COVID-19 policy, President Joe Biden has clearly opted for a go-slow approach. If we "follow the science," though, it's apparent that he's being too cautious.

In his first prime-time address in office, he addressed the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in America. He expressed hope that, by Independence Day, family and friends could gather once again. But he immediately hedged, adding that this "doesn't mean large events with lots of people together, but […] small groups will be able to get together."

This is an overly cautious view, especially as the country has averaged more than 2 million doses administered daily since early March; as the recently authorized Johnson & Johnson vaccine ramps up deliveries, this will only accelerate further.

Follow the data. As of this writing, the average daily number of new cases has decreased by 78% in just two months' time. Since Jan. 12, 2021, the seven-day average of hospitalizations has declined by almost 64%.

January was indeed a deadly month, with a record high of 95,000 deaths, and in February, the country surpassed half a million deaths due to COVID. But deaths have been on a sustained decline since then, decreasing by 59% and are expected to continue to track the drop in cases and hospitalizations.

The continuing drop in case numbers, with the sharp decline in hospitalizations, is more than likely indicative of an approaching herd immunity—that is, the proportion of people in a population who need to be immune to an infection for it to stop spreading. Indeed, Dr. Marty Makary of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, a top expert in the field, believes America could achieve herd immunity as early as next month.

Perhaps with his eye on the end of the pandemic, the president cited the high rates of daily vaccination —between 1 and 2 million per day —and that all American adults would be eligible to get a shot in the arm by May 1. He also proudly announced that his administration would soon issue guidance on "what you can and cannot do once fully vaccinated, to lessen the confusion, to keep people safe, and encourage more people to get vaccinated."

Let us help lessen the confusion: those who are fully vaccinated—and therefore given nearly 100% protection against death or severe illness and over 90 percent protection against even infection—should return to their normal daily lives one or two weeks (for the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines respectively) after they receive the full course of the vaccine.

Biden's unambitious vision would be understandable if he were responding from scratch to the pandemic. For example, Biden said, "When I took office 50 days ago, only 8% of Americans after months—only 8% of those over the age of 65 had gotten their first vaccination."

Of course, when Biden took office, the Pfizer vaccine was authorized for barely more than one month, and the Moderna vaccine for slightly less. Furthermore, these vaccines only exist because of the efforts of the previous administration's herculean efforts epitomized by "Operation Warp Speed," one of the most impressive triumphs in the history of public health. It resulted in the development of vaccines in months rather than years.

Even Biden's announcement of the purchase of 100 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is in following the lead of the Trump administration's agreement to purchase 100 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine back in July 2020.

In addition, Biden came into office with a vast array of newly authorized drugs, therapeutics, and diagnostics for SARS-CoV-2, as well as a year's worth of lessons learned in the treatment of COVID-19.

With all of this at President Biden's disposal, America should be looking forward to the end of the pandemic. Vaccinating all adults by May 1 is a good way to build on gains already made.

The goal should be nothing less than the full reopening of every state or territory in America. Not only would this be better as a matter of leadership, it would also be more prudent in its own right.

The administration's timid vision is not without its own harm, separate from the real dangers of COVID-19. The economic harm of lockdown measures is readily seen in any downtown area, but less visible is the deteriorating mental health of Americans, particularly in children.

As Biden said, conditions may change that set us back in the fight against COVID-19. Nothing, however, as of yet, not even new variants of the virus, has truly threatened the tremendous progress we have made. The definitive end of the pandemic may be near and perhaps soon, a truly hopeful reality.

Kevin Pham, M.D, is a visiting policy analyst in domestic policy studies, and Robert E. Moffit, Ph.D., is a senior fellow in domestic policy studies, at The Heritage Foundation.

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Pivoting from the Final PA

This week we are moving away from discussing the Final Programmatic Agreement in detail, to talk about some recent personnel announcements at Joint Region Marianas (JRM) and at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command headquarters. This topic will be followed by a brief discussion on the economic power and influence that the Pentagon has in the Marianas and its relative size as one of America's largest employers.

One admiral leaving, another one coming

Rear Adm. Menoni is now getting ready to move on in his military career, ordered to the eastern U.S. seaboard to take charge of an organization that has 1) had previous problems with a past admiral's ability to lead, and 2) has as its purpose the ability to deliver mobile and ready to fight packages of surface ships, submarines, and aircraft that covers the eastern U.S. and north Atlantic regions.

Several admirals who held the position that Menoni currently holds at Joint Region Marianas, have gone on to attain a second, third, and on occasion, a fourth star. The job position of COMNAVMAR has historically been filled by folks who have backgrounds in naval aviation or submarine/undersea warfare, and who have previously served in Guam or in the greater Pacific.

Leadership changes in Hawaii

The change with senior military leadership in Guam is part of a larger effort undertaken by the Department of Defense to retire, reassign and/or promote leaders who have jobs that include and involve Guam and the Marianas in their portfolio of responsibilities.

For example, the current head of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. John Aquilino, will become the next leader of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, replacing Adm. Phil Davidson, subject to U.S. Senate confirmation. This change points to one noteworthy element and that is the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has always been a navy-controlled jewel. The air force, army and Marines have never had the opportunity to see their general officers selected to run this highly visible and highly complex organization, which literally oversees a large portion of the planet. The navy continues to have tight control of running U.S. Indo-Pacific Command because most of the areas covered by this organization cover much of the Pacific Ocean.

Yet a case can be made that the air force also has a huge part of ensuring that this organization keeps working properly. Only time will tell if another member of the military outside of the navy will run this organization. I suspect one day an air force officer will become head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, but it won't be without heavy resistance from the navy.

What this means for the Marianas

The leadership changes made by the military reflect a long-standing organizational construct that tends to bring in new people every two, three or four years. The flip side of this reality is that the overall policy constructs extended and executed in Guam, the Marianas, and the region really don't change all that much.

The next admiral coming to Guam will, like the ones before, walk into a deeply entrenched and organized bureaucratic support organization, staffed by local employees, uniformed and non-uniformed people from off-island and contractors of all types.

This constant movement of people in and out of Guam and the Northern Marianas has many consequences both good and bad. People constantly moving in creates ongoing pressures for housing that have resulted in continual upticks in the cost of housing up to this day. The consequence of these upward pricing pressures is that it creates additional stress for many Chamorros who must continually pay more for housing, furthering the conditions that limit housing options, displace families, or create poverty traps that are difficult to get out of.

A second consequence of having ongoing high demand for housing for military personnel is it gives landlords the ability to continually implement price increases for their property rentals. Property owners are also incentivized to lease to military personnel and other U.S. government employees because they know that the money coming in is almost guaranteed, because it is part of the financial stipend package afforded to those national government employees assigned to Guam and the Northern Marianas.

This kind of purchasing power continually advantages the military housed off base who are also receiving cost of living adjustment funds and additional cash to offset relatively high utility bills such as power and water. Those villagers who find themselves among the unemployed, underemployed, or full-time working poor don't get these kinds of guaranteed financial perks and cushions, placing them in situations where it becomes difficult or very difficult to attain real and substantial quality of life improvements.

America's largest employer and polluter

Some Chamorros may not realize this, but the Department of Defense is the single largest employer found within the American imperial landscape. It has over three million people on the military, civilian, guard, and reserve payrolls and each year the department receives over $700 billion in cash approved by the Congress and signed by the President. The Pentagon also hires scores of for-profit contracting and subcontracting companies that perform some the most sensitive, consequential, and expensive activities that range from major military weapons production of aircraft, satellites, tanks, and submarines, to service providers who focus on information technology systems integration or intelligence and cybersecurity support.

The Pentagon is also home to the largest cadre of lawyers in the United States who number close to 10,000 in total, working around the world, around the clock, and headquartered out of Washington, D.C. The military health care system supporting both the active duty and retired military populations is also one of the largest healthcare systems in the United States based on total appropriated dollars coming from Congress and the numbers of people enrolled.

But unfortunately, the military is also one of the largest polluters in the United States and the world. Just ask former Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

'Rick's Column'
By RICK PEREZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs *at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.*

Royal racism: Experience of Meghan and Harry all too typical among interracial couples

By GEOFFREY L. GREIF, MICHAEL E. WOOLLEY, and VICTORIA D. STUBBS
THE BALTIMORE SUN

Millions of people tuned into the riveting interview of Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, about their struggles with the royal family as the most high-profile interracial couple in today's world. Their experience with racism was shocking to many—but, unfortunately, not the thousands of other biracial couples in this country who face similar treatment on a regular basis.

Presently in the United States, 1 in 6 marriages are interracial or interethnic. Over 50 years ago, in 1967, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the landmark Loving v. Virginia decision that state laws banning interracial marriage were unconstitutional, it was 1 in 33. That case, which involved a Black woman marrying a white man, has echoes in today's world, both in the U.S. and in the United Kingdom. While social acceptance of interracial marriage has increased dramatically, such unions, for the couple as well as for their children, may still face hurdles within their family and broader society.

Since the fall, we have been interviewing interracial and interethnic couples about their marriages, their relationships with family and friends, and their children's identities. We also asked how they negotiate with each other around difference and deal with people outside their social networks if hurdles are thrown in their path. While we have representatives of different interracial marriages, we have chosen to focus initially on white women married to Black men, the most common gender configuration in Black-white marriages in the U.S. and the most relevant in Maryland, where close to 1 in 2 residents are white (non-Hispanic) and 1 in 3 are Black.

Our preliminary analyses show that white women report they have learned a great deal about race as a result of being married to a Black man. Their education includes a heightened awareness about being Black in America. This awareness reached a troubling stage for many of them following the summer of 2020 racial protests about the killing of unarmed Black men by police and the disturbing realization that their husband and biracial children may be at increased risk based on the color of their skin. Marriage also made them more aware of their white privilege and how they often negotiated on behalf of the couple with the world outside their home. In a few cases, they worried about their own safety while traveling with their husbands to less diverse parts of the country, communities with troubled histories regarding race relations and where they stood out.

The women told us about microaggressions they experienced from family members and friends. Unsympathetic Facebook postings about Black Lives Matter protests caused emotional distancing. The women's parents complimented their siblings who had married Asian individuals and were going to have "cute kids," yet no such comments were made about the offspring of their Black-white marriage. And they told us about their children, who sometimes struggled with their racial identity and felt they did not fit neatly into a peer group, a potential sign that our social progress has stalled.

Not everyone shared these experiences. Some had only found acceptance from family, friends and strangers. If they ran into trouble spots, they ignored them or framed them as an opportunity to teach others. Maryland, especially the areas around D.C. and Baltimore, was considered friendly territory by many we interviewed.

We see many parallels between what we are finding and the recent interview with Meghan and Harry: a racially sensitive perspective taken by Harry (but not by his family), fears about safety, outright racism from the media and members of the royal family, and racial identity building of Archie and the couple's next child.

Reading about what others experience who are in similar situations to us can be uplifting, traumatizing or both. For example, veterans living with PTSD may be re-traumatized by news stories of other veterans with PTSD. Similarly, watching others march for racial justice can be simultaneously upsetting and uplifting as society pulls together to battle injustice.

For interracial couples, hearing Meghan and Harry talk about their struggles with their extended families, may be helpful in thinking about their own experiences. It may leave them hopeful that a light is being shone on these relationships or saddened that, no matter who you are, differences and histories can be hard to overcome. Tuning into the interview may teach us all that pulling back the curtain on the insidious nature of racism can affect our most intimate relationships.

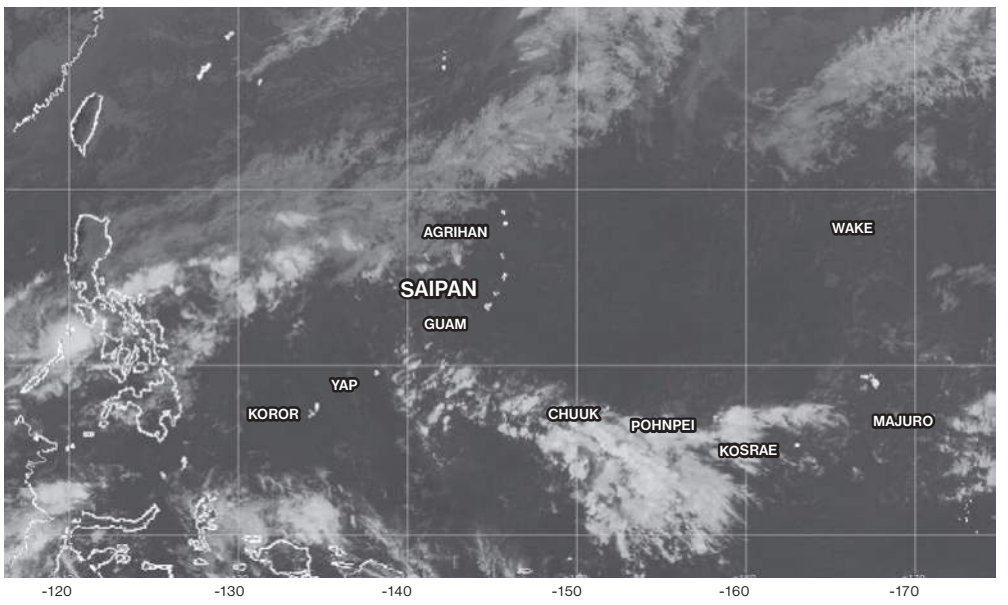
Geoffrey L. Greif (ggreif@ssw.umaryland.edu), Michael E. Woolley (mwoolley@ssw.umaryland.edu) and Victoria D. Stubbs (vstubbs@ssw.umaryland.edu) are all on faculty at the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:10 AM, SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trade winds, partly cloudy skies, and isolated light showers are present across the Marianas this morning. IR satellite imagery shows more of the same out to the east well beyond 150E. Seas at the buoys are indicated between 6 and 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	89 | 76 °F
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	85 | 77 °F
Yap	Rain	86 | 71 °F
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84 | 79 °F
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84 | 78 °F
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	85 | 79 °F
Majuro	Rain	85 | 80 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Tuesday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Wednesday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	7:34 AM	7:57 PM	-
Tuesday	8:09 AM	8:44 PM	-
Wednesday	8:45 AM	9:32 PM	-
Thursday	9:22 AM	10:20 PM	-
Friday	10:01 AM	11:10 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	69 | 56 °F
Beijing	Clear	62 | 31 °F
Hong Kong	Cloudy	67 | 60 °F
Honolulu	Clear	85 | 70 °F
London	Cloudy	61 | 45 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	85 | 57 °F
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	91 | 77 °F
Melbourne	Clear	90 | 70 °F
Miami	Clear	85 | 57 °F
New York	Clear	32 | 23 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	56 | 40 °F
Paris	Partly Cloudy	60 | 43 °F
Pusan	Clear	54 | 29 °F
Rome	Clear	61 | 41 °F
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	58 | 52 °F
San Francisco	Clear	66 | 51 °F
Seoul	Clear	55 | 28 °F
Tokyo	Overcast	58 | 41 °F
Washington, DC	Snow	36 | 24 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:01 AM	High Tide	0.21
9:06 AM	Low Tide	1.74
3:26 PM	High Tide	0.50
9:05 PM	Low Tide	1.69

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 5, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1, 5 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 5, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Live the beach life everyday with WAVE Apparel

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Established earlier this month, WAVE Apparel promotes good vibes, a positive outlook in life, and taking care of the environment. The logo consists of three mini waves which symbolizes movement and ease.

According to founder Mathew Richardson, a student at Northern Mariana sCollege, WAVE Apparel consists of comfortable clothing that shows designs of how unique the ocean is and the beauty of marine life because the vision is all about the ocean and our love for it. "It is a brand that helps spread love from experiences and connection with our waters that allows us to see new things and reveal possibilities….WAVE Apparel makes you go out of our way to take time to enjoy the ocean where friendships are made and fun times are brought upon each other," he said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

WAVE Apparel is the brainchild of Northern Marianas College student Mathew Richardson who is active in water sports activities and promotes protection of the environment.

"WAVE Apparel is also about spending time with our family or friends and respecting how the ocean provides for our families—a good reminder not to overfish, and conserve our waters for future generations," he added.

WAVE Apparel is for everyone—it doesn't distinguish but inclusive. "Whether you love seeing sunsets on the beach, to free dive, or get in the action and fish, WAVE Apparel is for someone who enjoys being near, above, and under water. We want to see our customers enjoy our designs and of course feel comfortable doing the things they do," Richardson said

Richardson is a hands-on businessman as he makes the unique designs on every WAVE Apparel. "Our designs are unique and on shirts which are currently available. We will be expanding our clothing line that aside from shirts, will also be selling long sleeves, different forms of jackets, and other similar clothing. They all have different designs that are always inspired by the ocean that hopefully would also inspire our customers to feel the best they can be," he said.

WAVE Apparel is available online on their FaceBook or Instagram pages.

"I wanted to start a clothing brand because I think it's an easy way to spread and show design available at reasonable prizes. I've always considered myself to be somewhat artistic and I got it from my mom. I have always wanted to produce something which is enjoyable, yet very unique with design," he added.

To see updates and pre-order, you can look them up on FaceBook: WAVE Apparel, Instagram: waveapparel 670 or email: mthwrichardson@gmail.com.

IRS says new round of COVID relief payments on the way

WASHINGTON (AP)—Along with daylight saving time, this weekend could bring some Americans fatter bank balances.

Officials at the Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service said Friday that processing of the new round of stimulus payments has already begun, with the aim of having the first payments start showing up in bank accounts this weekend.

President Joe Biden signed the new $1.9 trillion rescue package on Thursday, the day after it won final passage in the House. The measure provides for payments to qualifying individuals of up to $1,400, with payments to a qualifying family of four of $5,600.

"The payments will be delivered automatically to taxpayers even as the IRS continues delivering regular tax refunds," IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig said in a statement.

It is estimated that 85% of Americans will be eligible for the payments and the goal is to have millions of the payments disbursed in the next few weeks.

The relief measure, which passed on party-line votes in both the House and Senate, contains the third round of economic-impact payments. The first round passed last spring provided up to $1,200 per individual, and a second round of payments in December provided up to $600 per individual.

The latest package passed with no votes from Republicans, who objected to the size of the measure and argued it was not necessary given signs that the economy is beginning to recover.

Then-President Donald Trump called the payments in the $900 billion relief bill passed in December too small and Biden agreed, pushing the total for an individual up to $1,400 in the new package.

The latest round of relief payments will provide households with $1,400 for each adult, child and adult dependent, such as college students or elderly relatives. Adult dependents were not eligible to receive payments in the previous two rounds of payments.

The payments start declining for an individual once adjusted gross income exceeds $75,000 and go to zero once income hits $80,000. The payment starts declining for married couples when income exceeds $150,000 and goes to zero at $160,000.

Officials said that beginning on Monday, people can check the "Get My Payment" tool on the IRS.gov website to track their own payments.

Taxpayers who have provided bank information with the IRS will receive the direct-deposit payments, while others will get paper checks or debit cards mailed to them.

Officials said in the interest of speeding up the relief payments, the IRS will use the latest tax return available, either the 2019 return filed last year or the 2020 return that is due by April 15.

If a person's job situation changed last year because of the pandemic, which led to millions of people losing jobs or being forced to work reduced hours, officials said that the IRS will adjust the size of the new impact payments after the 2020 return has been filed and provide a supplemental payment if that is called for. Officials said those adjustments will be made automatically by the IRS for people who have already filed their 2020 returns.

Officials said they wanted to handle the payments this way rather than waiting for the 2020 tax return to be filed in the interest of speeding payments to taxpayers.

Roland appointed to Raymond James' Sustainable Investing Advisory Council

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.—Daniel Roland, CIMA, AIFA, managing director, has been appointed to the Raymond James Sustainable Investing Advisory Council, according to Samantha Trebesch, vice president of Strategic Initiatives at Raymond James and council chair. Raymond James' approach to sustainable investing is collaborative in nature across all business segments and heavily influenced by advisor feedback, including the council, which is comprised of a select group of 16 financial advisors across the firm's affiliation models. Established in 2018, the council's mission is to continue to enhance the firm's sustainable investing capabilities and resources made available to the firm's approximately 8,200 advisors and their clients, according to Kim Jenson, Chief Operating Officer of Raymond James' Private Client Group and executive sponsor of the firm's sustainable investing initiatives.

Roland

"Positive asset flows continue to reinforce growing interest in sustainable investing, providing our advisors the opportunity to further engage our high-net-worth clients in deeper relationships through impact investing, tying to their philanthropic efforts, and engaging the next generation in the wealth transfer through meaningful conversation around values and legacy building," said Jenson at the council's February 2021 meeting.

"We're very pleased with the progress of the council to date in advancing our sustainable investing insights and platform, namely expanding choice to advisors and clients in building positive impact through their portfolios," Trebesch added. "We're excited to welcome Daniel Roland, who brings a wealth of sustainable investing experience with institutional investors and a unique perspective working with clients impacted by climate change."

"I'm honored to be selected to serve on the firm's sustainable investing council," said Roland. "Many clients are increasingly more interested on how the investments they make impact the world around them, and Raymond James' thoughtful collection of valuable resources has assisted me in helping address this important aspect in my clients' financial plans. I'm thrilled to join this group of forward-thinking advisors as we help shape a platform that can make real-world differences to our clients."

Raymond James advisors have access to a variety of sustainable investing vehicles and resources to fit their clients' needs, including professional managed portfolios, individual equities and bonds, funds, green bonds, and alternative investments. For more information, visit https://www.raymondjames.com/commentary-and-insights/sustainable-investing-resources.

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Nation

In Louisville, Breonna Taylor's family honors her legacy

AP

Tamika Palmer, center, the mother of Breonna Taylor, leads a march through the streets of downtown Louisville on the one year anniversary of her death in Louisville, Ky., Saturday, March 13, 2021.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)— On the one-year anniversary of Breonna Taylor's death, the slain Black woman's family continued their call for justice as hundreds of demonstrators gathered in downtown Louisville on Saturday.

"Eyes are on Louisville, Kentucky, today so let's show America what community looks like," said Taylor's aunt, Bianca Austin, who wore her niece's emergency medical technician jacket.

Austin spoke from a stage set up in Jefferson Square Park, which became an impromptu hub for protesters during months of demonstrations last summer. Flanked by two hand-painted murals of Taylor, activists repeated calls to charge the police officers who killed the Black woman during a raid at her apartment.

The crowd shouted Taylor's name and "No justice, no peace" as they gathered near an outdoor memorial that includes a mural, posters, artwork and other mementos honoring Taylor's life. Some organizers gave away food during the speeches.

Taylor's family then led the protesters on an afternoon march past City Hall.

In a tweet Saturday, President Joe Biden called Taylor's death "a tragedy, a blow to her family, her community, and America."

"As we continue to mourn her, we must press ahead to pass meaningful police reform in Congress. I remain committed to signing a landmark reform bill into law," he wrote.

The rally came a day after Kenneth Walker, Taylor's boyfriend, filed a federal lawsuit against the Louisville Metro Police Department, alleging his constitutional rights were violated during last year's botched raid, news outlets reported. Walker last year filed an ongoing state lawsuit against the city and police, saying he was the victim of assault, battery, false arrest and malicious prosecution.

Taylor's front door was breached by Louisville officers as part of a drug raid in the early morning hours of March 13, 2020. Walker fired his gun once, saying later that he feared an intruder was entering the apartment. One officer was struck, and he and two other officers fired 32 shots into the apartment, striking Taylor five times.

Taylor's death initially flew under the media radar, as the COVID-19 crisis shut down society, but George Floyd's death in Minnesota and the release of a chilling 911 call from Walker in late May sparked interest in the case.

A grand jury indicted one officer on wanton endangerment charges in September for shooting into a neighbor's apartment, but no officers were charged in connection with Taylor's death.

Police had a no-knock warrant but said they knocked and announced their presence before entering Taylor's apartment, a claim some witnesses have disputed. No drugs were found in Taylor's apartment.

A Kentucky judge last week signed an order permanently closing a criminal case against Walker for firing at the officer.

Walker referenced the closure of the case against him during Saturday's rally.

"I gotta say that's a nice start, but that's not where we finish," Walker said. "We've got to keep going."

Demonstrator Olivia Alexander said the anniversary of Taylor's death reminded her to continue to work for racial justice, despite some setbacks in the past year.

"As we've seen, there's not been any justice for Breonna Taylor, and a lot of the other brutal killings of Black Americans, so holding onto hope has been the most important thing," Alexander said.

An ongoing federal investigation could be wide ranging and is regarded by many as the last chance for justice for Taylor's death.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, a Democrat, tweeted a statement in support of Taylor's family, including her mother, Tamika Palmer.

"Today we remember Breonna Taylor, her tragic and unnecessary loss and the immense work we have ahead of us," he said. "I will never understand the unimaginable grief of Tamika Palmer and other family and loved ones, but I am committed to listening and working with others to be build a more suitable and fair commonwealth for every Kentuckian."

'Obamacare' boost easy for some, but others face paperwork

WASHINGTON (AP)— Some consumers will find it quick and easy to take advantage of generous health insurance subsidies in the new COVID relief package, but others face extra paperwork and a wait, federal officials said Friday.

The $1.9 trillion legislation signed by President Joe Biden on Thursday includes among its dozens of provisions the biggest expansion of health insurance tax credits under the Affordable Care Act in a decade. It cements the place of the Obama-era law among government health insurance programs, after four years of fruitless efforts by former President Donald Trump to overturn it.

Biden's "Obamacare" expansion reduces costs for new customers, for those already enrolled in the program, for people who experience unemployment this year, and it may also help many whose incomes were too high to previously qualify for subsidies.

But it affects people in each of those groups in a different way, according to a summary released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS. Here's a quick overview:

■ Starting April 1, people who sign up at HealthCare.gov under a special enrollment period Biden opened up will automatically get the benefit of the higher subsidies authorized by Congress. The extra taxpayer-provided assistance reduces net costs by an average of $50 per person per month, CMS said. Think of it as a discount. The special sign-up period ends May 15.

■ More than 9 million already enrolled and receiving subsidies for their private health insurance plans also stand to benefit from the boost in aid. But they will have to go back to HealthCare.gov after Apr. 1 to get their discounts. Or they could wait until tax time next year to claim the richer tax credit owed them under the legislation. A CMS official said the agency is working to see if it can automatically provide current customers with their savings later this year.

■ People who experience a spell of unemployment this year are entitled to enroll in a standard HealthCare.gov plan at no cost to them. But officials said figuring out how to connect the health insurance program with unemployment assistance databases is going to take time. Nonetheless, CMS is urging unemployed people to enroll for health care now. They would be able to claim their full subsidies later.

■ People who previously made too much to get financial help under the "Obamacare" limits have some math to do. Congress not only increased the amount of aid, but changed the income formula so more people in the solid middle class can qualify. However, they'll have to have a health plan that meets the standards in the Obama health law. That means many may have to switch coverage.

Rescue aid package may reduce inequality, but for how long?

WASHINGTON (AP)— Democrats have celebrated President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief plan as a blow against one of America's most entrenched economic woes: The vast inequality that divides the richest from the rest—a gap made worse by the viral pandemic.

Hailed as the biggest anti-poverty package in generations, the plan delivers huge benefits to low- and middle-income families. It sends $1,400 checks to most adults and extends $300-a-week unemployment aid for six months. Perhaps most significantly, it greatly expands a child tax credit and turns it into steady income for poor families. All told, experts say, the package will reduce child poverty by nearly half.

Yet for how long?

As ambitious and expensive as it is, the American Rescue Plan, which Biden signed into law Thursday, stands to go only so far in reducing income and wealth inequality.

Its boldest measures, including a massive tax cut for the poorest families, are only temporary. To make a lasting difference, these provisions would have to be extended, probably in the face of stiff resistance from Republicans. And as an emergency response to a health and economic crisis, the legislation would do little to address the outsize gains in earnings and wealth that the richest tier of Americans have accumulated.

From 1979 to 2019, the wealthiest 1%'s share of pre-tax income jumped from about 11% to 19%, according to the World Inequality Database, maintained by Gabriel Zucman, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, and other experts on inequality. And that group's share of wealth—including real estate and stock portfolios—surged from roughly 23% to 35% in the same period.

"To further reduce inequality, Congress would need to increase taxation at the top end—in particular, the taxation of wealth and capital income," Zucman said. "There is a real risk, otherwise, that wealth concentration, which has surged over the last four decades, will keep rising in the post-COVID world."

For now, needy families will receive a substantial new financial cushion from the expansion of the child tax credit—though only until the expansion expires at the end of this year.

Under current law, most taxpayers can cut their federal tax bill by up to $2,000 per child. The rescue plan raises that to $3,000 for each child ages 6 to 17 and $3,600 for children under 6. Families eligible for the full credit will receive a chunk of the benefit as a monthly payout from July through December—$250 a month per child ages 6 to 17 and $300 a month for each child younger than 6.

Asia

Virus resurges as India slowly vaccinates more

NEW DELHI (AP)—India has registered its worst single-day increase in coronavirus cases since late December as the western state of Maharashtra battles a resurgence.

India's health ministry on Friday reported 23,285 new cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. It's the highest daily rise since Dec. 24, according to government data.

India has so far reported more than 11.3 million cases of coronavirus infection, the world's second-highest total after the United States. The cases had been falling steadily since a peak in late September, but experts say increased public gatherings and laxity toward public health guidance is leading to the latest surge.

The increase in new cases is being reported in six states, including Maharashtra, where authorities have announced a lockdown in densely populated Nagpur city. A weeklong complete lockdown will be implemented next week, officials said. The vaccine drive will, however, continue in the city.

Government health official Vinod Kumar Paul in a news conference Thursday said the latest surge, particularly in Maharashtra, was worrisome. He advised people not to lower their guard as "the pandemic is not yet over."

India began its vaccination drive in January and has advanced to the second phase, giving shots to health care workers, people older than 60 and people over 45 with significant health risks.

But the program aiming to vaccinate 300 million people by August is running way below capacity.

More than 26 million people have gotten a shot, though only 4.72 million are fully vaccinated with both doses.

India has reported more than 158,000 deaths from COVID-19.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ Hong Kong on Friday reported 60 new coronavirus infections, the highest number of infections in the city since late January. Of the new infections, 47 were linked to an outbreak at a gym in the Sai Ying Pun neighborhood that is popular among expatriates. Health authorities have ordered all employees of gyms in Hong Kong to be screened for the virus by Sunday. The gym cluster has so far infected a total of 64 people, including staff, customers and close contacts. Authorities have also ordered gyms to step up safety measures, including requiring members to wear masks while working out. Since the pandemic began the city has reported 11,211 cases of the coronavirus, with 203 deaths.

■ Thailand delayed its use of the AstraZeneca vaccine after Denmark and other European countries temporarily suspended vaccinations pending an investigation into reports of blood clots. Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha was to receive his first dose of the vaccine Friday but the public event was canceled less than an hour before it was scheduled to occur. Instead, a dozen health officials held an emergency news conference explaining the delay. Denmark said it has no evidence the vaccine caused the clots, and the European Medicines Agency said the vaccine can continue to be administered while the reported clot cases were evaluated. Thailand's delay further complicates the country's vaccination program. AstraZeneca and Sinovac are the only vaccines it has approved so far. Thailand is aiming to inject 10 million doses a month from June, and plan to cover at least half of the total population by the end of 2021.

Myanmar forces kill 7 as crackdown on protesters continues

MANDALAY, Myanmar (AP)—Security forces in Myanmar on Saturday again met protests against last month's military takeover with lethal force, killing at least seven people by shooting live ammunition at demonstrators.

Four deaths were reported in Mandalay, the country's second-biggest city, two in Pyay, a town in south-central Myanmar, and one in Twante, a suburb of Yangon, Myanmar's largest city. Details of all seven deaths were posted on multiple social media accounts, some accompanied by photos of the victims.

The actual death toll is likely to be higher, as police apparently seized some bodies, and some of the victims suffered grievous gunshot wounds that doctors and nurses working at makeshift clinics will be hard-pressed to treat. Many hospitals are occupied by security forces, and as a result are boycotted by medical personnel and shunned by protesters.

The independent U.N. human rights expert for Myanmar, Tom Andrews, said Thursday that "credible reports" indicated security forces in the Southeast Asian nation had so far killed at least 70 people, and cited growing evidence of crimes against humanity since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Other unofficial but carefully compiled tallies put the total number of deaths since the coup at around 90.

Saturday's killings did not faze demonstrators in Yangon who crowded a downtown commercial area past the official 8 p.m. curfew to hold a mass candlelight vigil and to sing about their cause. The mostly young protesters rallied at an intersection where they usually gather for daytime protests.

After-dark rallies was also held in Mandalay and elsewhere.

Reports on social media also said three people were shot dead Friday night in Yangon, where residents for the past week have been defying the curfew to come out onto the streets.

Two deaths by gunfire were reported in Yangon's Thaketa township, where a protest being held outside a police station was dispersed. A crowd had gathered there to demand the release of three young men who were seized from their home earlier Friday night. Photos said to be of the bodies of two dead protesters were posted online. The other reported fatality Friday night was of a 19-year-old man shot in Hlaing township.

The nighttime protests may reflect a more aggressive approach to self-defense that has been advocated by some protesters. Police had been aggressively patrolling residential neighborhoods at night, firing into the air and setting off stun grenades in an effort at intimidation. They have also been carrying out targeted raids, taking people from their homes with minimal resistance. In at least two known cases, the detainees died in custody within hours of being taken away.

Another possible indication of heightened resistance emerged Saturday with photos posted online of a railway bridge said to have been damaged by an explosive charge.

World

London police tactics at vigil for slain woman draw scrutiny

LONDON (AP)—London's police department is under scrutiny for the way officers handled some participants at an unofficial vigil Saturday night for a London woman whose death led to murder charges against a fellow officer and spurred a national conversation about violence against women in the U.K.

AP

People gather in Clapham Common, in memory of Sarah Everard, after an official vigil was cancelled, in London, Saturday, March 13, 2021.

Hundreds of people disregarded a judge's ruling and police requests by gathering at Clapham Common in honor of Sarah Everard, 33, who last was seen alive near the south London park on March 3. Demonstrators said they wanted to draw attention to the fear and danger many women see as a daily part of British life.

Everard disappeared while walking home from a friend's apartment at about 10:30 p.m. and was found dead a week later. The slaying sent shockwaves across the U.K. because a Metropolitan Police officer is charged with her kidnapping and murder.

Video of Saturday's informal vigil turned rally showed officers from the same police force tussling with participants as they pushed their way through the crowd. At one point, several male officers grabbed hold of several women and pulled them away in handcuffs to screaming and shouting from onlookers, Britain's Press Association reported.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan decried the police actions.

"The police have a responsibility to enforce Covid laws, but from images I've seen it's clear the response was at times neither appropriate nor proportionate," Khan said on Twitter.

Home Secretary Priti Patel tweeted that she had asked the Metropolitan Police for a full report on what happened.

The gathering happened hours after London constable Wayne Couzens, 48, appeared in court for the first time since his arrest in Everard's death. As Metropolitan Police officers approached the Clapham Common bandstand on Saturday evening, boos, jeers and shouts of "Shame on you" came from the crowd, according to the Press Association.

Organizers had hoped to hold "Reclaim the Streets" vigils in Everard's memory at the south London location and in other U.K. cities on Saturday but canceled the in-person events after a judge refused to grant an order allowing them to go on despite coronavirus restrictions that bar mass gatherings.

Hundreds of people showed up nonetheless. Before police moved in, many participants laid flowers at the park bandstand. Among them was Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, who was seen pausing for a moment in front of the sea of flowers.

Other people held signs reading "We will not be silenced" and "She was just walking home," and the crowd chanted, "Sisters united will never be defeated."

In the wake of Everard's disappearance and killing, many women have taken to social media to share their own experiences of being threatened or attacked while walking outside.

UN mandates South Sudan force to prevent return to civil war

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Friday to extend the almost 20,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, with a mandate "to advance a three-year strategic vision to prevent a return to civil war" and build peace both nationally and locally.

The resolution approved by the council also authorizes the mission, known as UNMISS, to "support inclusive and accountable governance and free, fair and peaceful elections."

It demands that all parties to the conflict and armed groups "immediately end the fighting throughout South Sudan."

There were high hopes that South Sudan would have peace and stability after gaining its long-fought independence from neighboring Sudan in 2011. But the world's youngest nation slid into ethnic violence in December 2013, when forces loyal to President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, started battling those loyal to Riek Machar, his former vice president who belongs to the Nuer people.

Numerous attempts at peace failed, including a deal that saw Machar return as vice president in 2016—only to flee the country months later amid fresh fighting. Intense international pressure followed a 2018 peace deal, and on Feb. 22, 2020 a coalition government led by Kiir, with Machar as his deputy, was formed. But peace still remains elusive.

The civil war has killed nearly 400,000 people and displaced millions, and the death toll keeps rising.

The Security Council resolution recognized the reduction in violence between parties to the peace agreement, "and that the permanent cease-fire was upheld in most parts of the country."

But it also strongly condemned all fighting, including increased violence between armed groups in some parts of the country "which has killed and displaced thousands. And it condemned the mobilization of these armed groups by members of the government's forces and by armed opposition groups.

The council demanded that South Sudan's leaders fully implement the permanent cease-fire including reconstituting the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council States and initiating "a permanent constitution-making process, with broad-based public consultations."

Council members expressed "grave concern" at ongoing reports of sexual and gender-based violence and demanded that all parties immediately halt all violence and human rights abuses including rape and violence against women, and hold those responsible accountable.

Health & Wellness

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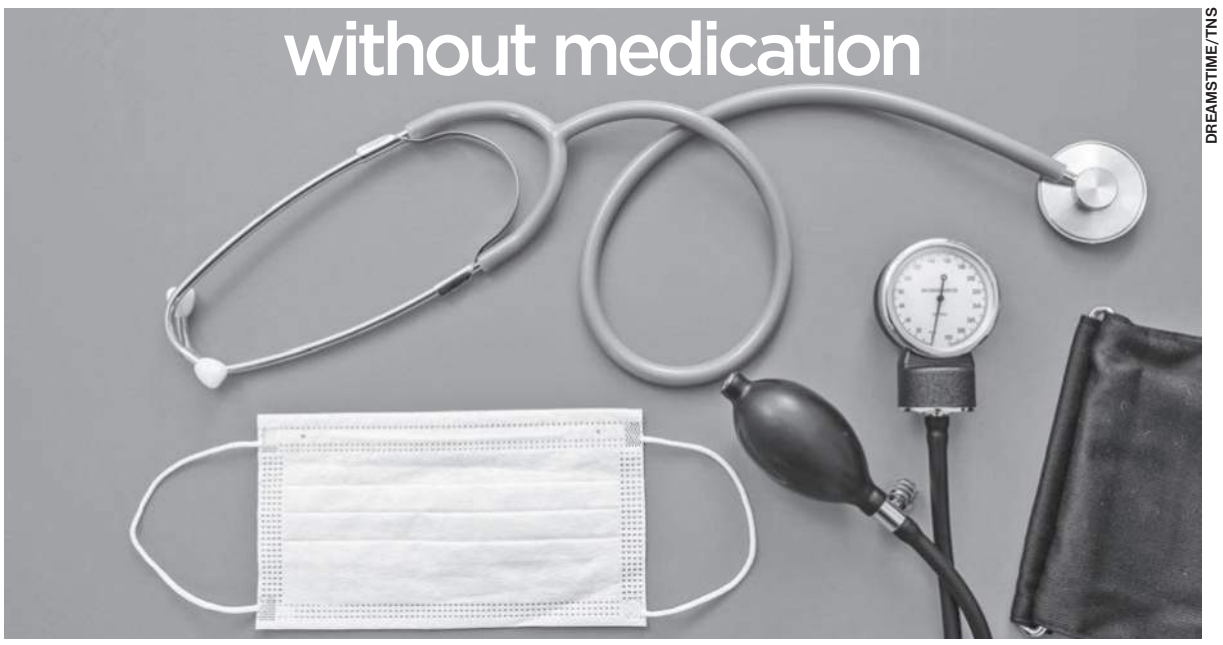
10 ways to control high blood pressure without medication

By making these 10 lifestyle changes, you can lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease.

If you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, you might be worried about taking medication to bring your numbers down.

Lifestyle plays an important role in treating your high blood pressure. If you successfully control your blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle, you might avoid, delay or reduce the need for medication.

Here are 10 lifestyle changes you can make to lower your blood pressure and keep it down.



DREAMSTIME/TNS

Lifestyle plays an important role in treating your high blood pressure.

1 Lose extra pounds and watch your waistline

Blood pressure often increases as weight increases. Being overweight also can cause disrupted breathing while you sleep (sleep apnea), which further raises your blood pressure.

Weight loss is one of the most effective lifestyle changes for controlling blood pressure. Losing even a small amount of weight if you're overweight or obese can help reduce your blood pressure. In general, you may reduce your blood pressure by about 1 millimeter of mercury (mm Hg) with each kilogram (about 2.2 pounds) of weight you lose.

Besides shedding pounds, you generally should also keep an eye on your waistline. Carrying too much weight around your waist can put you at greater risk of high blood pressure. In general:

Men are at risk if their waist measurement is greater than 40 inches (102 centimeters).

Women are at risk if their waist measurement is greater than 35 inches (89 centimeters).

These numbers vary among ethnic groups. Ask your doctor about a healthy waist measurement for you.

2 Exercise regularly

Regular physical activity—such as 150 minutes a week, or about 30 minutes most days of the week—can lower your blood pressure by about 5 to 8 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure. It's important to be consistent because if you stop exercising, your blood pressure can rise again.

If you have elevated blood pressure, exercise can help you avoid developing hypertension. If you already have hypertension, regular physical activity can bring your blood pressure down to safer levels.

Some examples of aerobic exercise you may try to lower blood pressure include walking, jogging, cycling, swimming or dancing. You can also try high-intensity interval training, which involves alternating short bursts of intense activity with subsequent recovery periods of lighter activity. Strength training also can help reduce blood pressure. Aim to include strength training exercises at least two days a week. Talk to your doctor about developing an exercise program.

3 Eat a healthy diet

Eating a diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and skimps on saturated fat and cholesterol can lower your blood pressure by up to 11 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure. This eating plan is known as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet.

It isn't easy to change your eating habits, but with these tips, you can adopt a healthy diet:

Keep a food diary. Writing down what you eat, even for just a week, can shed surprising light on your true eating habits. Monitor what you eat, how much, when and why.

Consider boosting potassium. Potassium can lessen the effects of sodium on blood pressure. The best source of potassium is food, such as fruits and vegetables, rather than supplements. Talk to your doctor about the potassium level that's best for you.

Be a smart shopper. Read food labels when you shop and stick to your healthy-eating plan when you're dining out, too.

4 Reduce sodium in your diet

Even a small reduction in the sodium in your diet can improve your heart health and reduce blood pressure by about 5 to 6 mm Hg if you have high blood pressure.

The effect of sodium intake on blood pressure varies among groups of people. In general, limit sodium to 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day or less. However, a lower sodium intake—1,500 mg a day or less—is ideal for most adults.

To decrease sodium in your diet, consider these tips:

Read food labels. If possible, choose low-sodium alternatives of the foods and beverages you normally buy.

Eat fewer processed foods. Only a small amount of sodium occurs naturally in foods. Most sodium is added during processing.

Don't add salt. Just 1 level teaspoon of salt has 2,300 mg of sodium. Use herbs or spices to add flavor to your food.

Ease into it. If you don't feel you can drastically reduce the sodium in your diet suddenly, cut back gradually. Your palate will adjust over time.

5 Limit the amount of alcohol you drink

Alcohol can be both good and bad for your health. By drinking alcohol only in moderation—generally one drink a day for women, or two a day for men—you can potentially lower your blood pressure by about 4 mm Hg. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

But that protective effect is lost if you drink too much alcohol.

Drinking more than moderate amounts of alcohol can actually raise blood pressure by several points. It can also reduce the effectiveness of blood pressure medications.

6 Quit smoking

Each cigarette you smoke increases your blood pressure for many minutes after you finish. Stopping smoking helps your blood pressure return to normal. Quitting smoking can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve your overall health. People who quit smoking may live longer than people who never quit smoking.

7 Cut back on caffeine

The role caffeine plays in blood pressure is still debated. Caffeine can raise blood pressure up to 10 mm Hg in people who rarely consume it. But people who drink coffee regularly may experience little or no effect on their blood pressure.

Although the long-term effects of caffeine on blood pressure aren't clear, it's possible blood pressure may slightly increase.

To see if caffeine raises your blood pressure, check your pressure within 30 minutes of drinking a caffeinated beverage. If your blood pressure increases by 5 to 10 mm Hg, you may be sensitive to the blood pressure raising effects of caffeine. Talk to your doctor about the effects of caffeine on your blood pressure.

8 Reduce your stress

Chronic stress may contribute to high blood pressure. More research is needed to determine the effects of chronic stress on blood pressure. Occasional stress also can contribute to high blood pressure if you react to stress by eating unhealthy food, drinking alcohol or smoking.

Take some time to think about what causes you to feel stressed, such as work, family, finances or illness. Once you know what's causing your stress, consider how you can eliminate or reduce stress.

If you can't eliminate all of your stressors, you can at least cope with them in a healthier way. Try to:

Change your expectations. For example, plan your day and focus on your priorities. Avoid trying to do too much and learn to say no. Understand there are some things you can't change or control, but you can focus on how you react to them.

Focus on issues you can control and make plans to solve them. If you are having an issue at work, try talking to your manager. If you are having a conflict with your kids or spouse, take steps to resolve it.

Avoid stress triggers. Try to avoid triggers when you can. For example, if rush-hour traffic on the way to work causes stress, try leaving earlier in the morning, or take public transportation. Avoid people who cause you stress if possible.

Make time to relax and to do activities you enjoy. Take time each day to sit quietly and breathe deeply. Make time for enjoyable activities or hobbies in your schedule, such as taking a walk, cooking or volunteering.

Practice gratitude. Expressing gratitude to others can help reduce your stress.

9 Monitor your blood pressure at home and see your doctor regularly

Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure, make certain your lifestyle changes are working, and alert you and your doctor to potential health complications. Blood pressure monitors are available widely and without a prescription. Talk to your doctor about home monitoring before you get started.

Regular visits with your doctor are also key to controlling your blood pressure. If your blood pressure is well-controlled, check with your doctor about how often you need to check it. Your doctor may suggest checking it daily or less often. If you're making any changes in your medications or other treatments, your doctor may recommend you check your blood pressure starting two weeks after treatment changes and a week before your next appointment.

10 Get support

Supportive family and friends can help improve your health. They may encourage you to take care of yourself, drive you to the doctor's office or embark on an exercise program with you to keep your blood pressure low.

If you find you need support beyond your family and friends, consider joining a support group. This may put you in touch with people who can give you an emotional or morale boost and who can offer practical tips to cope with your condition.

This article is written by Mayo Clinic Staff. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network/TNS)***

Life & Style

French actor strips for culture during Cesar Awards ceremony

The ceremony announcing the winners of this year's Cesar Awards, France's equivalent of the Oscars, included a loud cry for culture in the age of the coronavirus, with one actor stripping naked onstage to make a statement about the continued closure of cinemas and theaters.

Corinne Masiero came onstage

BERTRAND GUAY, POOL VIA AP

French actress Corinne Masiero, left, delivers a speech wearing a "Peau d'Ane" costume next to French actress and Master of Ceremony Marina Fois during the 46th Cesar Award ceremony on Friday, March 12, 2021 in Paris.

Friday night to present the best costume award wearing a donkey suit and tampons as earrings.

"Is that too trash?" Masiero asked the socially distanced audience before removing the donkey costume to reveal what looked like a blood-soaked dress and announcing "I have a last one."

Masiero, 57, the offbeat star of popular detective series "Capitaine Marleau," then took off the dress and exposed messages written on her body. The words on her front read, "No culture, no future." The message on her back was addressed to French Prime Minister Jean Castex: "Give us back art, Jean."

The audience applauded, but some commenters on social media denounced what they said was a descent into vulgarity at the 46th Cesar Awards.

The #MeToo movement roused last year's ceremony, where famed director Roman Polanski received best director award for "An Officer and a Spy" amid protests by women's groups and some boos and walkouts.

Polanski, who did not attend the event, is wanted in the United States decades after being charged with raping a 13-year-old girl in 1977. He pleaded guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor but fled the U.S. In 2019, a woman accused Polanski of raping her in 1975 in his Swiss chalet when she was 18. Polanski denied the allegations.

Most of the political views expressed this year were about reviving France's dormant cultural scene. Part-time actors are currently occupying several theaters around France, including Paris' famed Odeon Theater, to demand more government help.

Queen tells kids studying space of meeting Soviet cosmonaut

LONDON (AP)—There's no place like home.

Queen Elizabeth II reminded a group of schoolchildren studying space exploration about the importance of returning to Earth as she reminisced in a video call about the first man to make the trip—Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

The monarch, who invited Gargarin to Buckingham Palace shortly after his historic flight in 1961, was asked what the pioneering spaceman was like, according to details of the call released by the palace Friday.

"Russian," she replied with a smile as her audience chuckled. "He didn't speak English. He was fascinating, and I suppose being the first one it was particularly fascinating."

Space scientist Maggie Aderin-Pocock, who hosted the session to mark British Science Week, said it must have been terrifying to be the first man in space and not know what would happen.

"Well, yes, and if you could come back again," the queen replied. "That's very important."

Wednesday's call with students from Thomas Jones Primary School in west London came during a difficult week for the queen, after the royal family was rocked by charges of racism and insensitivity leveled at them by Prince Harry and Meghan.

J-Rod continues: Lopez, Rodriguez say they're still together

LOS ANGELES (AP)—J-Lo and A-Rod are still J-Rod.

Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez said Saturday that reports of their split are inaccurate, and they are working things through.

A day earlier, multiple reports based on anonymous sources said the pop star-actor and the former baseball great had called off their two-year engagement. The couple started dating in early 2017.

"All the reports are inaccurate," said the joint statement Saturday "from Jennifer and Alex," emailed to The Associated Press by representatives. "We are working through some things."

The New York Post's Page Six was the first to report that the pair had split.

The couple was given the nickname "J-Rod" three years ago after they landed on the cover of Vanity Fair magazine.

Minneapolis bowling alley drone video takes off online

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A video taken by a camera-equipped drone buzzing through the nooks and crannies of a historic Minneapolis bowling alley has attracted hundreds of thousands of views online.

The drone in the 1 1/2-minute video at Bryant-Lake Bowl follows bowling balls down the alley and takes viewers behind the alley's reset mechanism, back out onto the floor and into the bar.

The video is the work of 25-year-old cinematographer Jay Christensen, produced by Minneapolis-based Rally Studios and directed by Anthony Jaska, the Star Tribune reported.

"Guardians of the Galaxy" filmmaker James Gunn tweeted the clip to his 800,000-plus followers, saying he wanted the filmmakers "to come with us to London later this year when we shoot Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3."

Christensen, who lives near the bowling alley, was struck by the destruction and rebuilding along Lake Street following last year's rioting after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police.

Tape that: Dutch inventor of audio cassette dies at age 94

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)—Lou Ottens, the Dutch inventor of the cassette tape, the medium of choice for millions of bedroom mix tapes, has died, said Philips, the company where he also helped develop the compact disc.

Ottens died Saturday at age 94, Philips confirmed.

A structural engineer who trained at the prestigious Technical University in Delft, he joined Philips in 1952 and was head of the Dutch company's product development department when he began work on an alternative for existing tape recorders with their cumbersome large spools of tape.

Ottens

His goal was simple. Make tapes and their players far more portable and easier to use.

"During the development of the cassette tape, in the early 1960s, he had a wooden block made that fit exactly in his coat pocket," said Olga Coolen, director of the Philips Museum in the southern city of Eindhoven. "This was how big the first Compact Cassette was to be, making it a lot handier than the bulky tape recorders in use at the time."

The final product created in 1962 later turned into a worldwide hit, with more than 100 billion cassettes sold, many to music fans who would record their own compilations direct from the radio. Its popularity waned with the development of the compact disc, an invention Ottens also helped create as supervisor of a development team, Philips said.

The cassette tape's success stemmed from its simplicity, Ottens said in an interview published by the Philips Museum.

"It was a breakthrough because it was foolproof," he said, adding that players and recorders also could run on batteries, making them very user-friendly and, ultimately, portable.

"Everybody could put music in their pocket," Ottens said.

Mom feels powerless to cure what ails her adult daughter

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is in her early 20s. When she was younger, she was happy. She socialized, had friends and had fun. She has had several boyfriends, but unfortunately, nothing that panned out. She feels the only way to be comfortable or worth anything is to have a guy by her side. I think she goes about it in the wrong way. She has few friends now and rarely goes anywhere other than work. She experiences periods of depression and says she is afraid of being rejected, which holds her back from socializing. I try to encourage her to step out of her comfort zone and experience life, but she gets defensive and thinks I am saying it to be mean, when I am offering her something of value.

Abby, I do it out of care and love. I don't know how else to help her. I'm very worried about her. I'm afraid if she doesn't change her lifestyle, the situation will become worse, and she will regret it. These should be some of the best years of her life. Can you offer any suggestions to help her through these dark times?

MOM WHO'S WORRIED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR MOM: I do have one. The most important step a person can take to solve a problem is to admit there is one. Pointing out that someone seems depressed and isolated isn't mean; it's what caring parents (or friends) do when they see someone they care about is in trouble. When advising your daughter, make sure your tone is perceived as loving and not judgmental. Then point out that the quickest way for her to get her life back on track would be to talk to a licensed mental health professional.

DEAR ABBY: I got married while stationed in Korea. Over the years, I put drugs and alcohol and friends before my family. I regret it to this day.

I have four children and two of them are from the same woman. My oldest son and I chat almost daily through Messenger. This is the first time since retirement that I have been this far away from them.

My daughter and youngest son don't communicate with me in any fashion. I have sent text messages to both of them but received no reply. I learned a couple of days ago that my daughter has been married almost three years.

I miss my family dearly and wish to talk to both of them. Is it hatred and unforgiveness that I am feeling from them? It tears me up inside. I would feel better with any type of reply. What else can I do?

REACHING OUT IN ILLINOIS

DEAR REACHING OUT: There is nothing more you can do to get a response from your daughter and youngest son. You placed drugs, alcohol and friends before them when they were young, and this is the predictable response to emotional neglect.

Not knowing them, I can't say for certain that they "hate" you. They do, however, appear to be indifferent and unforgiving, and have moved on with their lives. You don't have much choice but to accept it and move on with your own while appreciating the relationship you have with your oldest son.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

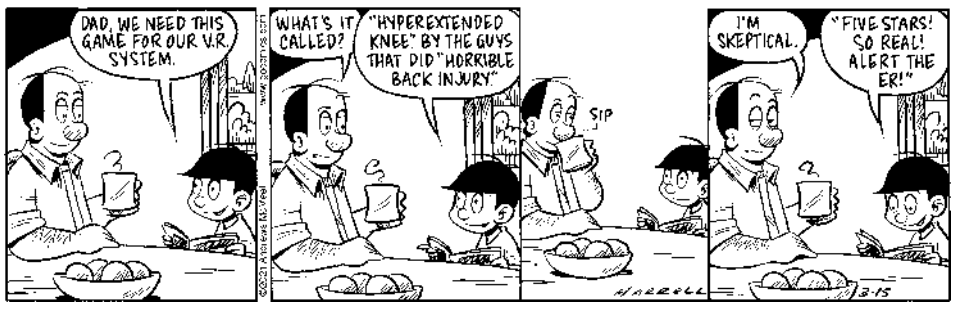
WELL LOOK AT YOU! DON'T YOU LOOK NICE AND NEAT!
YES, I BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GROOMING.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'D BETTER GET IN THE TUB IF I WANT TO BE IN BED ON TIME.
JUST WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

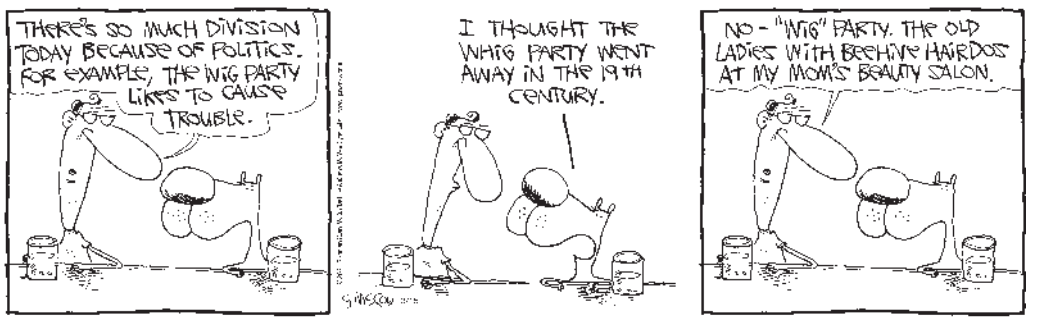
Adam@Home

By Bryan Basset


DAD, WE NEED THIS GAME FOR OUR V.R. SYSTEM.
WHAT'S IT CALLED?
"HYPEREXTENDED KNEE" BY THE GUYS THAT DID "HORRIBLE BACK INJURY."
SIP
I'M SKEPTICAL.
"FIVE STARS! SO REAL! ALERT THE ER!"

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


THERE'S SO MUCH DIVISION TODAY BECAUSE OF POLITICS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WIG PARTY LIKES TO CAUSE TROUBLE.
I THOUGHT THE WHIG PARTY WENT AWAY IN THE 19TH CENTURY.
NO - "WIG" PARTY. THE OLD LADIES WITH BEEHIVE HAIRDOS AT MY MOM'S BEAUTY SALON.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

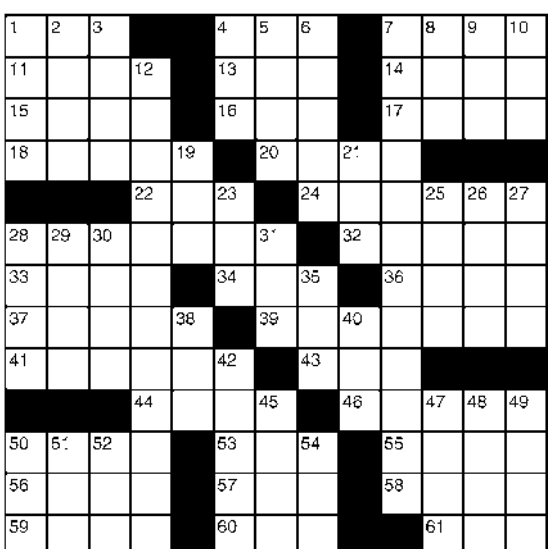
ACROSS
1 "Terrific"
4 Saloon
7 Pretzel seasoning
11 Grad
13 Rage
14 New Mexico resort
15 Costa —
16 Earl Grey, e.g.
17 Sitarist's music
18 Pandemic face coverings
20 Anti-oxidant berry
22 Consume
24 "For shame!"
28 Best Picture of 1997
32 Quiet partner?
33 "Dream on!"
34 High tennis shot
36 Apple tablet
37 Honey-dew, e.g.
39 Scrabble tile features
41 Fuel for a Rolls
43 Sailor
44 Snare
46 Plains grazers
50 Video-streaming site
53 Purchase
55 Spiced tea
56 Whitaker's Oscar-winning role
57 Mined-over matter
58 Basil or thyme
59 Valley
60 Workout unit
61 Ninny

DOWN
1 Crop-growing tract
2 Inter —
3 Tampa Bay team, for short
4 Morsel
5 Region
6 Flinch, say
7 Hit the jackpot
8 Small battery
9 Journal
10 Airport screening org.
12 Hit the jackpot
19 — Diego
21 Nile reptile
23 Up to
25 Carton sealer
26 Cicatrix
27 Sneakers brand
28 Pack (down)
29 "Under-stood"
30 Lean to one side
31 Army rank (Abbr.)
35 Wager
38 Neither here — there
40 Indent key
42 Parts partner
45 Chaste
47 The Mets' old home
48 Rowboat needs
49 Pen tips
50 Pos-sessed
51 Holly-wood's Thurman
52 Like Abner or Wayne
54 "Uh-huh"

Solution time: 26 mins.

C	A	S	K	S	■	B	E	_	■	R	C	A
A	V	I	L	A	■	E	M	I	■	H	A	N
B	E	Z	E	L	■	F	I	Z	Z	I	N	G
■	■	Z	E	A	L	O	T	■	E	N	O	L
T	I	_	■	D	E	N	■	T	B	O	N	E
L	O	E	B	■	N	E	V	E	R	■	■	■
C	U	R	_	E	D	■	I	N	A	T	J	B
■	■	■	I	S	L	E	T	■	S	I	S	I
B	A	R	N	S	■	N	R	A	■	Z	E	N
A	M	A	T	■	S	T	O	_	T	Z	■	■
D	I	Z	Z	I	E	R	■	I	R	I	S	H
E	N	E	■	B	R	A	■	B	O	E	R	S
R	O	D	■	M	A	P	■	I	T	S	A	N

Last Friday's Answer 03/15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kellan Lutz, 36; will.i.am, 46; Eva Longoria, 46; Bret Michaels, 58.

Happy Birthday: Look at the possibilities, dream and start in a direction that brings you peace of mind, hope for the future and a realistic plan to help you reach your destination. Enthusiasm, discipline and information will encourage the success you desire and the help you require to excel. Charm will help convince others to join you on your journey. Your numbers are 9, 11, 19, 21, 26, 30, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Branch out, and you'll discover new possibilities. An opportunity to switch courses will give you something to ponder. Follow your heart, and take the path that offers personal, professional and financial peace of mind. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Put unfinished business to rest before you start something new. Find out where others stand before you voice your opinion. Information is power; the more you know, the easier it is to bypass mistakes. Take a moment, reflect and respond cautiously. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Who you believe and associate with matter. Don't be gullible or let someone's charm lead you astray. Do your due diligence, find opportunities and do your own thing. Learn from the experience you encounter, and do what's best for you. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't overreact when patience, understanding and affection can provide solutions and better relationships with others. Put a unique spin on a job you do, and praise will be forthcoming. Don't give in to anger or let someone's words disillusion you. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Show passion in what you pursue, and make overdue adjustments. Channel your energy into new beginnings and opportunities that allow you to collaborate with like-minded people. Strive to finish what you start and engage in celebration. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Think before you speak. If you want to make progress, you'll have to choose your words and the people you work alongside wisely. Don't be fooled by empty promises; gravitate toward those who take action and make things happen. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Refuse to let uncertainty take over. Find out the truth and proceed with your plans, and it will help you bypass someone trying to push you in a questionable direction. Don't wait for someone to offer you something; make opportunities. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Taking a journey will tempt you. Whether it's a spiritual path, personal growth or in search of expanding your creative skills, you can accomplish plenty if you are honest with yourself and refuse to let anyone stand in your way. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Open your mind. Observation can be an excellent teacher. Take pleasure in what others have to offer, and be aggressive in pursuing what brings you joy. Keep a healthy perspective and a positive and loving attitude when dealing with others. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't let anyone goad you into an emotional argument. Keep the peace, and you will bring about positive changes at home and work. A different approach to using your skills will pay off. Don't fear being different. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Discipline will pay off. Consider what you spend your time doing, and look for a way to turn it into a service you can offer others. Utilize your space to accommodate what you do well, and take on a new venture. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Pace yourself. Ensure your ideas are good before you share them with prominent people. Iron out challenges, and put together a solid plan. Don't lose sight of what's important, and nurture relationships that matter. Self-improvement is encouraged. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are demonstrative, original and proactive. You are optimistic and insightful. ✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		9	1	8				
	6			3			7	
	1	8				3	5	
5			4		1			3
6	2			8			1	4
8			3		6			7
	9	2				6	4	
	8			6			3	
			1	9	3			

Difficulty Level ★ 3/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

7	3	4	2	9	1	5	6	8
2	5	8	6	3	7	1	4	9
6	1	9	5	4	8	3	2	7
4	6	2	1	7	3	8	9	5
9	7	5	8	2	4	6	3	1
1	8	3	9	5	6	2	7	4
8	4	1	7	6	2	9	5	3
3	9	6	4	1	5	7	8	2
5	2	7	3	8	9	4	1	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SIEGFRIED FISCHBACHER (1939-2021) Solution: 6 letters

S	T	I	G	E	R	M	I	E	H	N	E	S	O	R
C	A	O	T	E	A	M	G	E	R	M	A	N	Y	E
H	E	G	U	S	A	U	D	I	E	N	C	E	S	M
E	S	N	E	R	N	O	N	I	N	S	I	D	E	R
E	M	N	T	V	C	O	G	R	E	H	T	A	F	O
T	L	I	A	E	A	E	I	Y	N	O	T	S	A	F
A	N	E	A	I	R	C	S	S	G	F	A	R	M	R
H	I	N	V	A	C	T	A	R	U	N	I	A	S	E
G	S	R	M	E	A	I	A	T	T	L	R	Z	D	P
I	R	L	A	C	N	M	G	I	I	I	L	Z	R	R
W	E	W	U	M	R	O	C	A	N	O	A	I	A	I
D	T	H	O	Ⓡ	N	S	I	U	M	E	N	E	P	D
U	S	T	C	A	Ⓞ	G	S	L	C	A	R	E	O	E
L	I	I	T	A	L	Ⓨ	O	B	W	O	H	S	E	E
T	S	I	N	O	I	S	U	L	L	I	B	U	L	C

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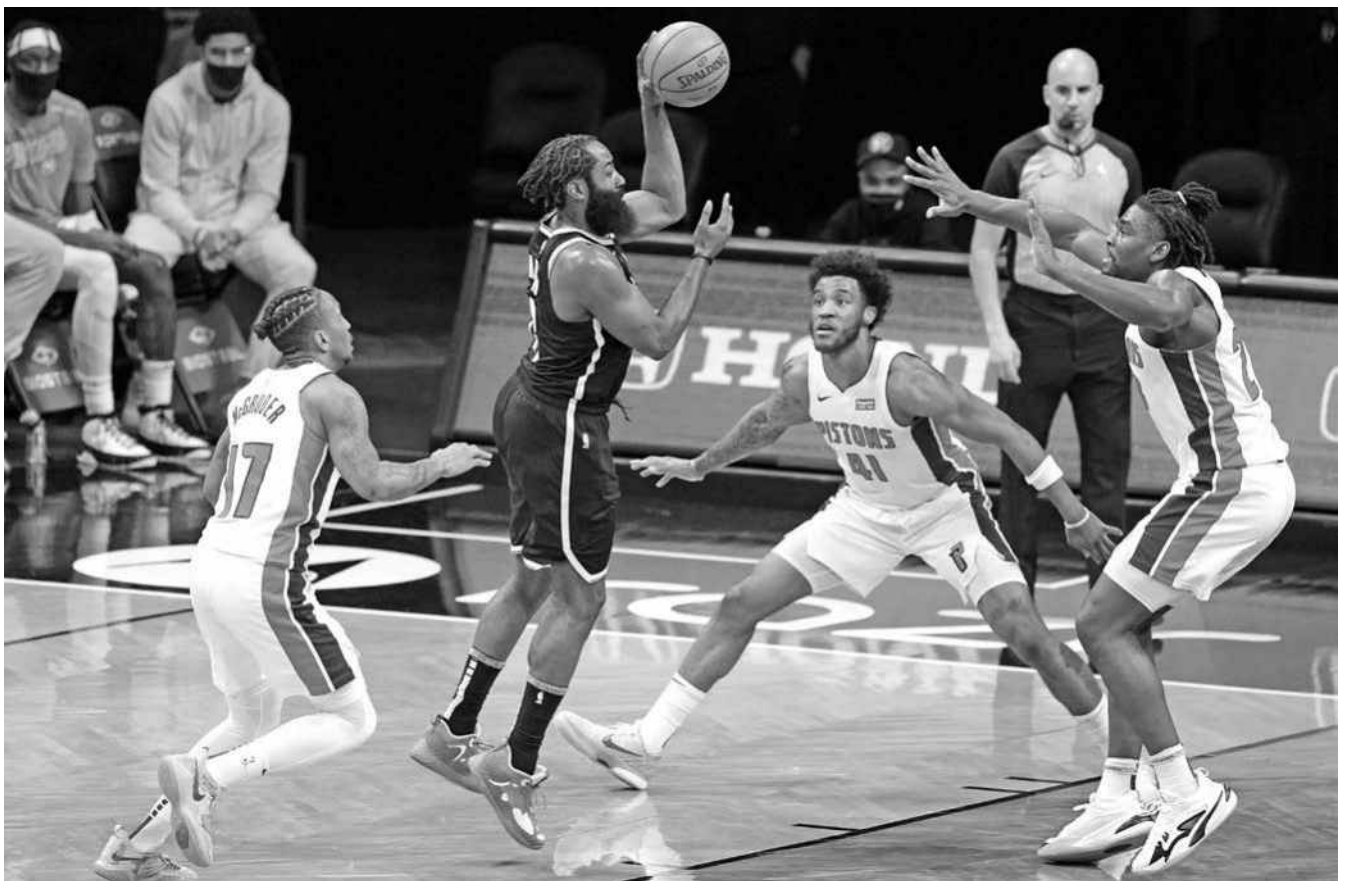
Acts, Antics, Audiences, Azzie, Care, Cats, Cheetah, Club, Delmare, Eleven, Entertainers, Farm, Fast, Father, Germany, Horn, Illusionist, Illusions, Insider, Italy, Leopards, Lion, Ludwig, Magicians, Margot, Maria, Marinus, Martin, Oceans, Performer, Pride, Rosenheim, Roy, Showboy, Sign, Sister, Team, Tiger, Tony, Tour, Uwe, Vacation, Vegas

Last Friday's Answer: Statements

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Harden has triple-double, Nets roll past Pistons



AP

Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden (13) passes the ball as Detroit Pistons forward Saddiq Bey (41), guard Rodney McGruder (17) and center Isaiah Stewart (28) defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, March 13, 2021, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—James Harden scored 12 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter and had his ninth triple-double with the Nets to help Brooklyn beat the Detroit Pistons 100-95 on Saturday night.

Harden also had 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his 55th triple-double as Brooklyn improved to 26-13 with its 12th win in its last 16 games.

Kyrie Irving added 18 points, and Landry Shamet had 15 off the bench. DeAndre Jordan chipped in with 14, and Joe Harris contributed 10 points.

Jerami Grant scored 22 points as Detroit fell to 10-28. Saddiq Bey and Delon Wright each finished with 13.

Bucks 125, Wizards 119

In Washington, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 33 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds for his sixth triple-double of the season in Milwaukee's victory over short-handed Washington.

Jrue Holiday added 10 of his 18 points during the fourth quarter for the third-place Bucks. They have won eight of nine.

Russell Westbrook scored 42 points — including 15 of Washington's last 18 — and added 10 rebounds and 12 assists for his NBA-leading 11th triple-double.

Pacers 122, Suns 111

In Phoenix, Malcolm Brogden scored 25 points and Domantas Sabonis had a triple-double with 22 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists to lead Indiana past Phoenix.

Doug McDermott also had 22 points for Indiana. Caris LeVert made his much-anticipated Indiana debut following surgery to remove a mass on his kidney. He started and had 13 points in 27 minutes.

Devin Booker had 20 points for the Suns. They had their five-game winning streak snapped and fell to 25-12.

Knicks 119, Thunder 97

In Oklahoma City, RJ Barrett scored a career-high 32 points, and Julius Randle had a triple-double to lead New York past the Oklahoma City.

Randle had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists to became the first Knicks player with two triple-doubles in a same season since Mark Jackson in 1988-89.

Al Horford had 16 points for Oklahoma City.

Hornets 114, Raptors 104

In Charlotte, N.C. (AP) — LaMelo Ball had 23 points and nine rebounds and Charlotte beat short-handed Toronto in the Hornets' first game of the seasons with the general public allowed to attend.

Devonte Graham and Terry Rozier each added 17 points for the Hornets, who seemed to feed off having fans— about 3,000 of them — in attendance for the first time in more than a year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Kyle Lowry finished with 19 points and eight assists for Toronto.

Mavericks 116, Nuggets 103

In Denver, Luka Doncic had 21 points and 12 assists, and Kristaps Porzingis scored 25 points in Dallas' victory over Denver.

Nikola Jokic had 26 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds for the Nuggets. They had won five straight.

The Mavericks led by seven early in the third and pulled away from long range. Dallas was 9 of 18 on 3-pointers in the period and took just six shots from inside the arc. Josh Richardson hit all three of his 3-point attempts and Maxi Kleber made both of his, including one at the end of the period that made it 93-73.

Trail Blazers 125, Timberwolves 121

In Minneapolis, Carmelo Anthony scored 26 points and Damian Lillard added 25 points and 10 assists in Portland's victory over Minnesota.

Karl-Anthony Towns led Minnesota with 34 points and 10 rebounds. The Timberwolves have lost 14 of 16 and are 1-6 under new coach Chris Finch.

Hawks 121, Kings 106

In Atlanta, Trae Young scored 17 of 28 points in the third quarter, Clint Capela had 18 of his 24 in the first half and Atlanta beat Sacramento for its fourth straight victory.

Capela also had 14 rebounds to help the Hawks improve to 4-0 under interim coach Nate McMillan. De'Aaron Fox led the Kings with 32 points.

Source: Embiid could miss up to 2 weeks with knee injury

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers star center Joel Embiid has a bone bruise on his left knee and could miss at least two weeks, according to a person with knowledge of the injury.

Embiid did not suffer structural damage to his knee and will be evaluated again in two weeks. The person spoke on condition of anonymity Saturday because the severity of the injury had not been announced.

Embiid was injured in the Sixers' win Friday over Washington. Embiid landed awkwardly after a dunk on his left leg, his knee joint appearing to bend slightly forward. He writhed in pain on the floor for several minutes, and a stretcher was briefly brought on the court, but the center limped off under his own power.

Embiid has emerged as an MVP candidate after helping the 76ers to the Eastern Conference lead. He's averaging 29.9 points and 11.5 rebounds in 31 games.

The 76ers host San Antonio on Sunday.

Morey embraces challenges of leading 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Like any top NBA executive this time of the season, Daryl Morey is trying to better his roster. Sure, NBA Top Shot — sort of a collectible highlight reel — is in its infancy, but Morey is all in on the frenzy stirred by digital dunks and nonfungible fast breaks.

"I just grabbed all the Sixers," Morey said. "Well, I don't have all of them because they're hard to get. But I've got Joel (Embiid), I've got Ben (Simmons), I've got Tobias (Harris), I've got (Tyrese) Maxey, I've got (Matisse) Thybulle.

"Some of the players need to complain and say, 'Where are my highlights?'"

Say, for example, Seth Curry.

So Morey juggles answering questions over Zoom about his first season running the Philadelphia 76ers with a Top Shot search on his laptop for clips of their starting shooting guard.

Morey needs patience completing his digital lineup.

He can revel that the real one on the court has been about as good as it gets in the NBA. The Sixers (26-12) have the best record in the Eastern Conference headed into Sunday's game against San Antonio, the first one in Philly with fans since the coronavirus pandemic began. Morey says he can't wait to see and hear what the fans are all about.

His Instagram Q&As are part of his appeal that connects him with fans and makes them feel like they're together in the championship chase.

"Younger fans want to feel like they're part of something," Morey told The Associated Press in an interview this week.

Morey is here after 14 seasons running the Houston Rockets to make the Sixers feel like they're part of something they've largely missed out on since 1983 — the championship conversation. Yes, that's the 48-year-old Morey fist-bumping general manager Elton Brand after big buckets and lingering in his row with the front-office team long after the final horn, but he oversees a team largely in place when he was named president of basketball operations in November.

Simmons and Embiid, an MVP candidate, are the All-Star cornerstones and Harris is having a career year under Doc Rivers. Rivers, who coached the Boston Celtics to the 2008 NBA championship, in his first season in Philly has maximized the talent on a team swept out of the first round of the playoffs last season.

"He really knows his stuff and does it as good or better than anything I would do if I dove in," Morey said. "It allows me to just focus on my job, which is try and get better players for him."

The NBA trade deadline is March 25 and that means rumors and fantasy deals are at the forefront in Philly—the Sixers were in the mix for James Harden before he was traded to Brooklyn—and Morey said he's not necessarily pursuing a blockbuster to shake up the lineup.

"We have a great group, a great chemistry, they're playing at a high level, they play even better against very good teams," Morey said. "That's something fragile and we need to respect it. Long story short, everyone expecting some big thing, I would ask them to be excited about who we have more than what's possible."

The path toward a top seed in the East—already more rugged in the second half, starting with a six-game road trip later this month—cratered when Embiid went down Friday night with a bone bruise on his left knee. Embiid has 29.9 points and 11.5 rebounds in 31 games and blossomed into the rarified air of true NBA elite players.

Simmons is a regular triple-double threat and Harris went from overpriced scapegoat to legitimate All-Star candidate averaging a career-best 20.2 points. Curry, a 44% career 3-point shooter, is just off that clip at 43%. The Sixers are 14th in the NBA in 3-point percentage but only 28th in total attempts. On Morey's watch, Houston averaged 45.3 3-pointers per game last season, tops in the league.

"Well, we happen to have the best inside players in the NBA," Morey said. "I don't care how we win, just that we win. I would say our offense does need to be better. You want to be at least top 10. If you ask me, how are we going to make our offense better, it wouldn't be by shooting 3s. Joel, Tobias and Ben all are top 10 in terms of being able to score 10 feet and in, so I don't know why you'd do anything much else. The other guys we have are good at spacing. But Ben, Joel and Tobias are so good inside, we don't need it."

Morey and Rivers are both experienced at handling superstar players with supersized egos, and making sure one basketball can satiate three scorers hasn't become an issue—if it becomes an issue— quite yet.

"I've found people are generally who they are by that age," Morey said. "But I would say one source of tension that can come up that we are past, is that until everybody gets paid, I think there can be tension. All our main three guys are all paid, and hopefully feel well paid. They should. We're past where a lot of tension can come from that."

Boxing great Marvelous Marvin Hagler dies at 66

Marvelous Marvin Hagler stopped Thomas Hearns in a fight that lasted less than eight minutes yet was so epic that it still lives in boxing lore. Two years later he was so disgusted after losing a decision to Sugar Ray Leonard—stolen, he claimed, by the judges—that he never fought again.

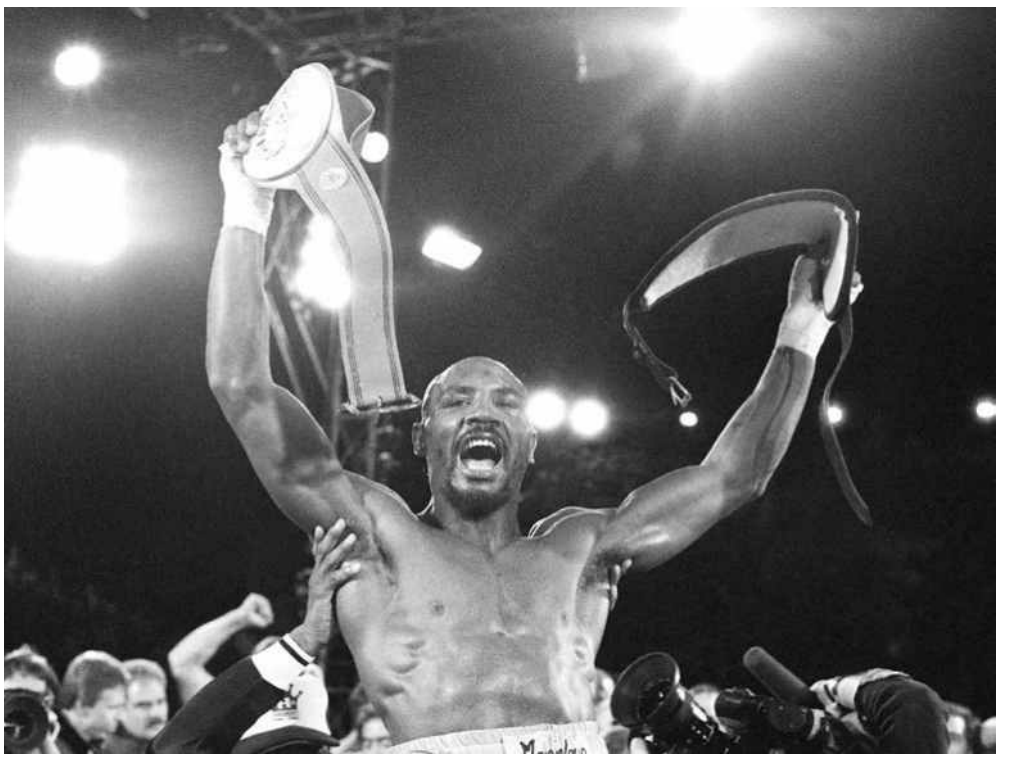
One of the great middleweights in boxing history, Hagler died Saturday at the age of 66. His wife, Kay, announced his death on the Facebook page for Hagler's fans.

"I am sorry to make a very sad announcement," she wrote. "Today unfortunately my beloved husband Marvelous Marvin passed away unexpectedly at his home here in New Hampshire. Our family requests that you respect our privacy during this difficult time."

Hagler fought on boxing's biggest stages against its biggest names, as he, Leonard, Hearns and Roberto Duran dominated the middleweight classes during a golden time for boxing in the 1980s. Quiet with a brooding public persona, Hagler fought 67 times over 14 years as a pro out of Brockton, Massachusetts, finishing 62-3-2 with 52 knockouts.

"If they cut my bald head open, they will find one big boxing glove," Hagler once said. ``That's all I am. I live it."

Hagler was unmistakable in the ring, fighting out of a southpaw stance with his bald head glistening in the lights. He was relentless and he was



AP
In this November 1983 file photo, Marvin Hagler celebrates his unanimous-decision victory over Roberto Duran in a boxing bout in Las Vegas.

vicious, stopping opponent after opponent during an eight year run that began with a disputed draw against Vito Antuofermo in 1979 that he later avenged.

He fought with a proverbial chip on his shoulder, convinced that boxing fans and promoters alike didn't give him his proper due. He was so upset that he wasn't introduced before a 1982 fight by his nickname of Marvelous that he went to court to legally change his name.

"He was certainly one of the greatest middleweights ever but one of the greatest people that I've ever been around and promoted," promoter Bob Arum said. ``He was a real man, loyal and just fantastic person."

Any doubts Hagler wasn't indeed Marvelous were erased on a spring night in 1985. He and Hearns met in one of the era's big middleweight clashes outdoors at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas and when the opening bell rang they traded punches for three minutes in an opening round many consider the best in boxing history.

Hagler would go on to stop Hearns in the third round, crumpling him to the canvas with a barrage of punches even as blood poured out of a large gash on his forehead that nearly caused the referee to stop the fight earlier in the round.

"When they stopped the fight to look at the cut, I realized they might be playing games and I wasn't going to let them take the title away," Hagler said later. "It was a scary feeling. I thought, 'Why are they stopping this fight?' I didn't realize I was bleeding. It wasn't in my eyes. Then I knew I had to destroy this guy."

Arum said Hagler simply willed himself to victory over Hearns, whose big right hand was feared in the division but couldn't keep Hagler at bay.

``That was an unbelievable fight," Arum said. ``Probably the greatest fight ever."

Hearns said Saturday he was thinking about Hagler and their historic fight. Hagler wore a baseball cap with the word ``War" while promoting it while on a 23-city tour with Hearns that Arum said made the fighters despise each other before they even entered the ring.

``I can't take anything away from him," Hearns told The Associated Press. ``His awkwardness messed me up but I can't take anything away from him. He fought his heart out and we put on a great show for all time."

Hagler would fight only two more times, stopping John Mugabi a year later and then meeting Leonard, who was coming off a three-year layoff from a detached retina, in his final fight in 1987. Hagler was favored going into the fight and many thought he would destroy Leonard—but Leonard had other plans.

While Hagler pursued him around the ring, Leonard fought backing up, flicking out his left jab and throwing combinations that didn't hurt Hagler but won him points on the ringside scorecards. Still, when the bell rang at the end of the 12th round, many thought Hagler had pulled out the fight—only to lose a controversial split decision.

Hagler, who was paid $19 million, left the ring in disgust and never fought again. He moved to Italy to act, and never really looked back.

"I feel fortunate to get out of the ring with my faculties and my health," he said a year later.

Hagler took the long route to greatness, fighting mostly in the Boston area before finally getting his chance at the 160-pound title in 1979 against Antuofermo as a co-main event with Leonard fighting Wilfredo Benitez on the same card. Hagler bloodied Antuofermo and seemed to win the fight, but when the scorecards were tallied he was denied the belt with a draw.

Hagler would travel to London the next year to stop Alan Minter to win the title, and he held it for the next seven years before his disputed loss to Leonard.

Arum remembered being at a black tie event honoring top fighters a year later that was attended by both Hagler and Leonard, among others. He said Leonard came up to him and pointed to Hagler across the room and suggested he go talk to him about a rematch that would have earned both fighters unbelievable purses.

``I went over to Marvin and said Ray is talking about a rematch," Arum said. ``He glared at me as only Marvin could and said, `Tell Ray to get a life.'"

Hagler was born in Newark, New Jersey, and moved with his family to Brockton in the late 1960s. He was discovered as an amateur by the Petronelli brothers, Goody and Pat, who ran a gym in Brockton and would go on to train Hagler for his entire pro career.

He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame and World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1983. ***(AP)***

Nobody comes for free in NFL free agency that begins Monday

By BARRY WILNER
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The term in use these days is "legal tampering." Doesn't seem sensible, and some might call it the "cheating period" instead.

Regardless, on Monday, two days before the NFL's 2021 business year begins, the 32 teams and agents for the players will be making deals. Lots of deals, even if they aren't official until Wednesday.

"I hate calling it the legal tampering period because that just seems like that's a debacle of the English language," Rams general manager Les Snead says. "Legal tampering, and tampering is illegal? But we'll have to adjust based on that because there's no guarantee that you can re-sign (players)."

Even at a time when the salary cap has plummeted by $16 million due to lost revenues during the COVID-19-impacted 2020 season, lots of money will be going to the most-prized players.

That likely will include Tampa Bay pass rusher Shaq Barrett; Green Bay All-Pro center Corey Linsley and standout running back Aaron Jones; Detroit wide receiver Kenny Golladay; San Francisco tackle Trent Williams; and Chargers tight end Hunter Henry. No superstars about to break the bank, but plenty of proven talent to help teams improve before turning attention to next month's draft.

Of course, free agency always is a buyer-beware situation.

"Yeah, we want talented players; but we want a good cohesive unit and guys who fit well together," Dolphins coach Brian Flores says. "That's not always 11 stars. It's almost never that way.

"So we've scoured free agency, the draft, and I think we have a pretty good feel for the types of guys we are looking for from a skillset standpoint, but also from a locker room standpoint as people as well. ... That's an important factor that can't be overlooked. All of those things play a role."

Nine players have been given franchise tags: receivers Chris Godwin (Tampa Bay) and Allen Robinson (Chicago); offensive linemen Taylor Moton (Carolina), Cam Robinson (Jacksonville) and All-Pro Brandon Scherff (Washington); safeties Marcus Maye (New York Jets), Marcus Williams (New Orleans) and Justin Simmons (Denver); and defensive tackle Leonard Williams (New York Giants).

Dallas locked up quarterback Dak Prescott with a four-year deal, and J.J. Watt, released this offseason by Houston, signed with Arizona. Those were the biggest names potentially available.

Snead's Rams didn't use the tag, which could mean losing solid safety John Johnson or revitalized linebacker Leonard Floyd or center Austin Blythe.

"Strategically, probably philosophically, you'd love to be able to not utilize the franchise tag and work to get something done long term," Snead says, "just because usually when there's a franchise tag used, the history of it says it's very hard to get something done longer term off of that tag."

Thus far, the Super Bowl champion Buccaneers have played the free agency game best this month. It helps when your high-priced quarterback is willing to redo his deal to open up spending room, something Tom Brady did frequently in New England, then again this week in Tampa Bay.

Voila: Lavonte David, a key linebacker, was re-signed, and several other key guys in the title run could be back.

Another star, Panthers running back Christian McCaffrey, followed Brady's lead in reworking his contract.

Players in a strong position to land a nice payday include Saints defensive end Trey Hendrickson; Steelers wideout JuJu Smith-Schuster and edge rusher Bud Dupree; Ravens edge rusher Yannick Ngakoue and linebacker Matthew Judon; Patriots guard Joe Thuney; Titans tight end Jonnu Smith; Bengals defensive end Carl Lawson; Chargers linebacker Melvin Ingram; and Bucs running back Leonard Fournette.

And yes, there are quarterbacks on the market, some of whom could wind up starting in new locales. Will Jameis Winston leave New Orleans, particularly if Drew Brees retires? Teddy Bridgewater seems destined for somewhere other than Carolina in 2021, though he still belongs to the Panthers. The same could be true with the Jets' Sam Darnold.

Free agent Jacoby Brissett will be heading away from Indianapolis and Ryan Fitzpatrick possibly will find yet another team to help as a mentor/backup/starter. Same thing for NFL Comeback Player of the Year Alex Smith.

Mitchell Trubisky is out there. So are Andy Dalton and Joe Flacco.

Long-term deals will occur, but with a reduced salary cap this year and the promise of rising caps through the rest of the decade after the NFL's new broadcasting contracts kick in, a more than usual number of one-year deals are possible. That could delay some signings for weeks as players expecting big numbers are disappointed with initial offers.

Flores admits the Dolphins could be observers rather than participants.

"This is a very unique year," he says. "We do have some money from a cap standpoint that we can spend; but again, it's an interesting year. I think I'm going to be playing the song 'You Can't Always Get What You Want' on Day 1 in free agency, to be honest with you, because we may get priced out on some guys we're looking at that we'd like to have."

Many clubs could be in that position—and need to recognize that if you try sometimes, well, you might find what you need.

Yanks newcomer Kluber takes another step after 2 lost years

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Corey Kluber overcame occasional wildness, allowing two runs and four hits over four innings in his second start, and the New York Yankees beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 7-5 on Saturday.

Kluber is a two-time Cy Young Award winner with his third team in three years. He has thrown one inning since being hit on the right forearm by a comebacker in May 2019, none since tearing a muscle in his right shoulder in his Texas debut last July 26. That injury ended his season after one inning.

Kluber hit two batters, threw a wild pitch and allowed a third-inning solo homer to Troy Stokes Jr. He struck out two in an outing when the Pirates went down in order just once.

"Some pitches, probably, could have been located a little better, been a little sharper" Kluber said. "The home run, first pitch, left it a little too much over the plate. Definitely some stuff to work on. Fine tuning location, things like that."

AP

New York Yankees starting pitcher Corey Kluber delivers during the first inning of a spring training exhibition baseball game against the New York Yankees in Tampa, Fla., Saturday, March 13, 2021.

"I was happy with the way I felt physically," he said.

The right-hander allowed a leadoff double and hit a batter in the first inning but got out of the jam with a double play. After a perfect second, Kluber gave Stokes' homer and then avoided further damage by working out of a two-on, one-out situation.

Kluber, who turns 35 in April, struck out three over two perfect innings in his other start on March 3 against Toronto. He had a live batting practice session five days later.

After losing to the eventual AL champion Tampa Bay Rays in a five-game Division Series last year, the Yankees allowed Masahiro Tanaka, James Paxton and J.A. Happ to become free agents. They signed Kluber to an $11 million, one-year contract and acquired Jameson Taillon from Pittsburgh for four prospects.

"Looks like himself," Yankees second baseman DJ LeMahieu said, "Ball's moving all over the place."

New York's projected rotation also includes ace Gerrit Cole and Jordan Montgomery. Deivi García and Domingo Germán are among the candidates for the fifth starter spot.

AYUYUS

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liminaries of the 500m dash at last place, less than a second behind SSHS, at 2:57.12 to earn 2 points.

In the finals of the 500m dash, KHS sped past its foes to finish the round with a time of 2:55.30 to gain another 10 points.

SSHS submitted a time of 2:59.83 in the finals of the 500m dash to gain 6 points, while MHS came in at 3:02.13 to earn 2 points.

In the prelims of the 1,000m, KHS started off slow but regained momentum at the second go-around to finish with a time of 6:06.69.

SSHS closely tailed KHS in the first go-around but lost momentum in the second and finished 7 second behind at 6:13.69.

MHS finished last by a hair, submitting a time of 6:16.69.

In the finals of the 1,000m, KHS and MHS were neck-and-neck but KHS prevailed after pushing hard in the second turn-around to finish 6:06.89. MHS came in just 3 seconds late at 6:09.70.

SSHS completed the finals of the 1,000m at last place with a time of 6:20.53.

Also defending their championship title was the MHS girls paddling team who has held their title for the last three years. In the co-ed competition, KHS also won.

The Public School System Student Support Services Athletic Program held the canoe series with assistance from Northern Marianas Paddle Sports.

Giants' Brandon Belt works back from COVID-19, then mono

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Brandon Belt got hit with quite a double-whammy that derailed his offseason.

First, in January, he contracted the coronavirus. Then, he immediately became ill again with mononucleosis.

Gradually regaining his strength and stamina at last, the San Francisco Giants first baseman acknowledges he isn't sure he will be ready for opening day. That had been the hope after he worked back from surgery on his right heel in October to remove a bone spur.

The mono zapped him so much the 32-year-old Belt was forced him to stay in bed for a week.

"All of this going on here in the past couple months, I was pretty concerned with how the heel was going to rehab as well, but honestly it's been going great," Belt said Saturday before the Giants played Cleveland in Scottsdale, Arizona.

"It's still been loosening up. It feels great, it feels so much better compared to last year. Now it's just a matter of getting the strength back in my foot and just doing day-to-day activities so that I can build the strength and stamina up in my foot to be able to go a whole game. I don't think I'm too far away."

COVID-19

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COVID-19 within the community, matches in the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association-organized leagues continued as planned over the weekend continued as scheduled.

"Community developments are being monitored closely and if there are any changes to the league schedule, the NMIFA will be sure to notify the public," a statement from the NMIFA said.

However, NMIFA is currently enforcing a temporary restriction of youth ages 12 and younger from entering the training facility in Koblerville.

Face masks are mandatory before entering the training facility and individuals must practice social distancing at all times while inside.

Harden has triple-double, Nets roll past Pistons

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Boxing great Marvelous Marvin Hagler dies at 66

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Ayuyus 3-peat as paddling champs

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Kagman High School completed a three-peat in the boys division of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series after earning a perfect overall score throughout the season that concluded last Saturday.

KHS successfully kept its three-year streak intact after routing foes Marianas High School and Saipan Southern High School throughout the entire season. KHS swept first place in all four events of the series to gain a perfect 85 points.

KHS paddling captain Noah Mesa, who has been paddling for the KHS team for the past three years, said it was hard work but it was all worth it.

"This is my last race and I am so proud of my team. I wouldn't have had it any other way," he said.

Although it was his final race for KHS, Mesa said he is rooting for KHS to continue defending the title and would love to see them continue to win even without him.

Aside from Mesa, Elbert Pinaula, Christian Achas, Koen Kabriel, Jericho Jones, Jacoby Cabrera, Joedy Pinaula, Andrew Camacho, David Igisiar, Sebastian Muna, Max Cruz, Richard Cepeda, and Oliver Weilbacher also make up the KHS paddling team.

SSHS, who holds No. 2 in overall standings, lagged behind KHS by a margin with just 41 points overall followed by MHS with 27.

The last leg of the series held last Saturday was a 500m dash and 1,000m race for double the points. KHS won first in both the preliminary and final rounds of both races to earn 40 points.

In the preliminary round of the 500m dash, KHS bested foes with a time of 2:50.19 to gain 10 points.

SSHS came in at a close second, lagging behind the defending champs by just a little under 6 seconds, with a time of 2:56.64 to earn 6 points.

MHS completed the pre-

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KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

The men's Kagman High School Paddling Club poses for a photo after being awarded their third championship in a row following the conclusion of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series last Saturday.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

The members of the Kagman High School men's paddling crew complete their final race of the season in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series last Saturday.

COVID-19 cancels basketball anew

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI recording its first local transmission of COVID-19 in 204 days resulted in the postponement of the Rollers Basketball Association's NMI RBA Spring Madness league that was just starting to enter its championship phase at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

In a short statement from tournament director Ethan Kwon, RBA is pushing back all games until further notice.

"Yes, we are pushing back our games until further notice and will most likely resume next weekend," he said.

Kwon said RBA is taking such measures to ensure the safety of the children who are participating in the spring caging.

"We are playing it safe for the kids. We would like to give the [Governor's] COVID-19 Task Force enough time to do their contact tracing before we resume," he said.

The decision to postpone the league, which was heading into its championship matches with the U11 scheduled to complete its second championship match last Saturday, came immediately after a number of community members tested positive over the weekend.

Over the weekend, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force identified a community cluster of cases which identified eight new positive COVID-19 cases within the community.

One of the new positives was a student at the Garapan Elementary School that resumed face-to-face learning just a few months back.

In other news, despite the recent development of

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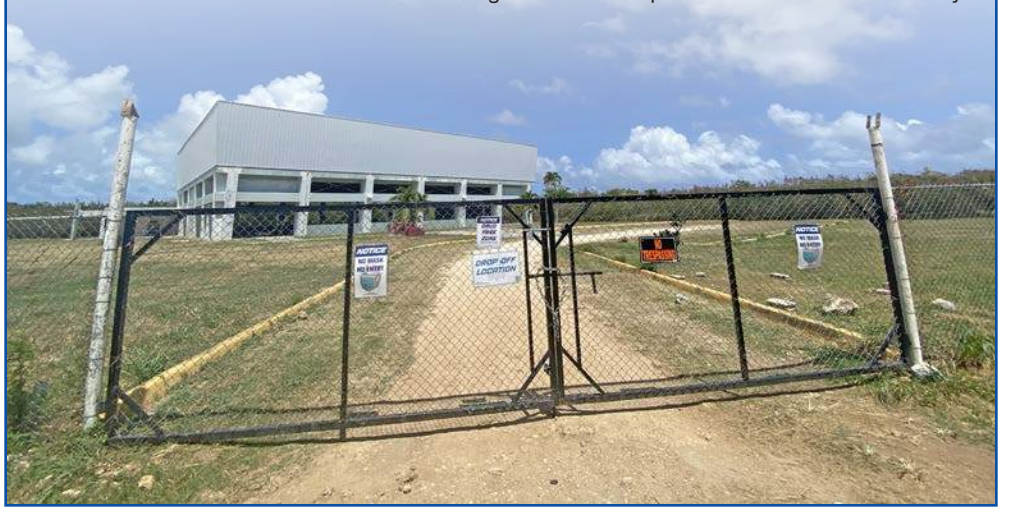

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

The gates of the Koblerville Gymnasium that hosts the NMI Rollers Basketball Spring Madness tournament were locked last Saturday as a result of the recent surge of COVID-19 positive cases in the community